



THE WORKS  
OF  
THE REV. RICHARD WATSON.

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VOLUME VII.

CONTAINING  
REMARKS ON THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST;  
AN AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS  
TO THE TRUSTEES, STEWARDS, LOCAL PREACHERS, AND  
LEADERS OF THE LONDON SOUTH CIRCUIT;

AND  
REVIEWS, PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY IN THE  
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REMARKS  
ON  
THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST;  
AND  
THE USE OF REASON  
IN  
MATTERS OF REVELATION.

SUGGESTED BY SEVERAL PASSAGES IN DR. ADAM CLARKE'S  
COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

THIRD EDITION.

I GRATEFULLY receive, and rejoice in, the light of revelation, which sets me at rest in many things, the manner whereof my poor reason can by no means make out to me.  
LOCKE.



# REMARKS

ON

## THE ETERNAL SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

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DEAR SIR,

YOU request my opinion on those passages of Dr. Clarke's Commentary in which he has rejected a doctrine received in all ages, and by every church reputed orthodox,—the eternal filiation of the second Person of the Holy Trinity; and also on those principles which he has laid down in support of his own views,—views not new, but which have of late been almost peculiar to those who entirely reject the essential divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I should have been very unwilling to be the first to excite a controversy on these subjects. Had the notions in question passed off, as certain peculiarities of opinion in Dr. Clarke's Commentary have done, noticed only for the moment, and now almost forgotten, I would not have recalled to them the attention of his readers, better employed, I hope, on the many excellent illustrations of Scripture which his work contains. But from their notorious opposition to the sentiments most commonly received among Christians, and in that religious body to which Dr. Clarke belongs, they have been the subject of much and serious discussion; they have made some converts, and have mooted subjects which have never been put into discussion in any church without considerable mischief. This was the case before any reply was made to them: Since then a written controversy has commenced, and my reasons for engaging in it may be briefly stated. I consider it a very



serious one. I think a clearly revealed truth has been given up by Dr. Clarke ; and that he has defended his opinions by arguments, and on principles, which, however innocently held by himself,—as to their practical influence on his own thinkings on religious subjects,—are very capable of being turned against doctrines which he reveres in common with all orthodox Christians.

I would, however, premise,

1. That I approach the subject merely as a matter of theological inquiry. The notes objected to are before the world ; they are proposed, as other writings, to the judgments of men ; and lie open to remark and criticism.

2. That I have no feeling but that of respect towards Dr. Clarke. My personal acquaintance with him is but slight ; and what I know of him by his writings has impressed me with a high sense of his talents and virtues.

3. That I have not taken up the subject under the idea that the learned Annotator does not most firmly believe in the essential divinity of Christ. Of this doctrine his notes afford ample proof, and contain masterly and irrefragable arguments ; and I am further persuaded that, at the time he wrote those passages in which he restricts the application of the term “ Son of God ”—as it occurs in the New Testament as an appellation of Christ—to his human nature, he conscientiously believed that he was removing an objection to the doctrine of our Lord’s divinity. And,

4. That, though I shall have occasion to remark that he has, in some instances, adopted Arian and Socinian rules of interpreting Scripture, and, as I conceive, very dangerously, I strongly protest against this being construed into an insinuation that I associate Dr. Clarke with the theologians of either class. At the same time, honesty obliges me to confess, that though the Doctor’s great qualities may keep him secure upon those premises which, on some subjects, he has assumed, yet they appear to me to have produced contradiction and inconsistency in his comments. It is seriously to be apprehended, that many of his readers will be greatly bewildered by them in their religious opinions, and that their direct tendency is to

lead to errors which Dr. Clarke himself would be the first to condemn.

These particulars being premised, I hope that it will appear to you, and to others, that I enter upon the discussion with that respect for Dr. Clarke which his learning and talents demand; and that it is quite consistent with this respect to feel that we owe, more than to any man, a deference to truth: The one is propriety, the other is imperative duty.

The present inquiry respects, First, the eternal Sonship of Christ; which Dr. Clarke denies: Secondly, the principles by which he has corroborated his negation of that doctrine.

As to the first, the question is precisely this: Are the appellations, "Son," "Son of God," and others of similar import, in the New Testament, to be considered, in every instance, designations of our Lord's human nature, imposed with reference to his miraculous conception; or, are they used also as appellations of his divine nature, with reference to his personal existence in the Trinity, and expressive of one of his peculiar and eternal relations, in that personality, to God the Father? This is the course of inquiry; and if it can be proved that the doctrines of the eternal filiation of Christ, and the essential personal paternity of God the Father, are contained in Scripture, the question, as to most of Dr. Clarke's readers, will, I hope, be considered sufficiently determined.

"The doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ," says Dr. Clarke, "is, in my opinion, anti-scriptural. I have not been able to find any express declaration in the Scriptures concerning it."\* Here, then, we are at issue. But before the evidence from Scripture is adduced, I must remark, that if by the phrase "express declaration," he means that there is no passage which states in so many words that Jesus Christ, according to his divine nature, is the eternal Son of God, this is an objection to a doctrine which he overlooks in other cases. There is no passage which, in the same terms, expressly asserts that the three divine Persons are one God, except it be that in 1 John, so often disputed, and the genuineness of which Dr.

\* Commentary, Luke i. 36.

Clarke has given up ; no passage which, in so many words, states the union of two natures in one Person in Christ ; and no one which expressly enjoins the administration of baptism to infants. Yet Dr. Clarke admits these doctrines, and practises this rite. I do not know what idea he may attach to the express statement of a doctrine ; but I am warranted to conclude, from his admission of the doctrines just named, and from his administering baptism to infants, that he does not, in other cases, hesitate to form his judgment on the necessary sense of Scripture, even where he does not find the explicatory phraseology adopted in the theology of subsequent ages in the sacred text. To me it appears, and I think also it appears to Dr. Clarke, where the point in debate is not in question, that there is an express enunciation of a doctrine in Scripture when it is found in the literal sense of any of its passages ; when there is nothing in any other part of the revelation to oblige us to depart from the literal sense ; when the meaning of other passages restrains us to this literal signification ; and when no consistent sense can be made out if the doctrine be not admitted. If this be allowed, then I hope to make it appear that the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is expressly announced in the revelation which God has given of his Son. If words have meaning,—and the holy text is not to be turned from its obvious sense, by subjecting it to some unauthorized standard of fitness and reason,—I do not anticipate any difficulty in the demonstration. And though it be allowed, that it is not uncommon for the sacred writers, because of the personal union of the two natures of Christ, to ascribe actions and relations to our Lord under the appellations of the “ Son of God,” and the “ Son of Man,” which, interchangeably, apply to either nature ; if it be clearly made out that the term “ Son of God,” and others of the same import, are used when the divine nature of Christ is either contemplated separately, or in direct contradistinction to his human nature, the argument, I conceive, is fairly established, though many passages should be considered as entirely neutral. Nor would the argument, from the use of the term where the divinity of Christ is contemplated, in opposition to his humanity, be

at all weakened were we to admit,—which I am not prepared to do, not even in the instance of Luke i. 35, for reasons which shall be afterwards given,—that the term “Son of God” is sometimes applied to the human nature of Christ, considered in like manner separately and in contradistinction to his divinity; for even then it would remain to be proved that it is used in this sense only.

I proceed, therefore, to establish this argument, by adducing a few passages from the New Testament in which “Son of God,” and other cognate terms, are applied solely and exclusively to the divine nature of Christ; which passages cannot, by fair interpretation, be otherwise understood, and are, therefore, to me, decisive proofs of the doctrine in question.

The epithet “only-begotten” occurs in the New Testament only five times, as applied to Christ; and in two of the passages it is used with great emphasis; they both occur in the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.’ (Verse 14.) “No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (Verse 18.)

On the latter passage I remark, that if the term “only-begotten Son” be used, as Dr. Clarke’s scheme supposes, with reference to the human nature of Christ, the text contains a contradiction. “No man” (*οὐδείς*, *nullus*, *nemo*) “hath seen,” that is, in Scripture language, hath known, the Father; “the only-begotten Son” he hath seen and known him, and hath therefore declared him; but if this “only-begotten Son” were the man Jesus, separately and distinctly considered as a man, then at least one man, one human being composed of flesh and blood, had seen God and declared him; which the former part of the verse denies. Between the term “only-begotten,” and the nature of man, there is an obvious opposition.

The fourteenth verse is still stronger. The glory which the disciples saw, which they exclusively saw, a “glory as

of the only-begotten of the Father," or such as became the only-begotten of the Father, could not be human glory. Christ had not, like Moses, any splendour of personal appearance ; no rays of light beamed from his countenance to mark him out as a divine messenger ; and if this glory be referred to his miraculous works, as these works were wrought, not by his human, but his divine, power, this view would fix the term "only-begotten" as a note of supreme and absolute divinity, demonstrating itself by miraculous operations. There is, however, another and more striking view of the passage : There appears, as most critics have observed, an allusion in it to the tabernacle of Moses, the sacred tent of the divine Shechinah : 'The Word was made flesh, and' (*εσχηνωσεν*) "pitched his tabernacle among us." Agreeably to this, the fleshly body of Christ is represented by the Evangelist as having an indwelling glory, the glory of a divine inhabitant, "the only-begotten Son." This was not seen by the Jewish people ; for though "he came to his own, his own received him not," they did not admit his claims. But his disciples received him : In their habitual converse with him, in the wisdom with which he spake, in the super-human virtues he manifested, in the miraculous works he wrought, they saw the evidences, the occasional beamings forth, of the divinity which dwelt within him ; and this glory is denominated a "glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." This I conceive to be the sense of this noble passage ; but whatever may be thought of the reference to the tabernacle of Moses, the argument is not affected by it. Unless Dr. Clarke will acknowledge the glory seen by the Apostles to have been merely the glory of his human nature,—of which he had none, as far as I can discover, from the circumstance of having been supernaturally conceived,—the glory must have been that of a higher nature, which nature is called, expressly called, "the only-begotten of the Father ;" and, indeed, as the context shows, was the glory of the Word made flesh.

There is a singular confusion in Dr. Clarke's note on this passage, which could only arise from the difficulty of making out a consistent sense upon the scheme that the appellation

“the only-begotten of the Father,” is given to Christ because of his miraculous conception. He first adopts the allusion to the divine Shechinah, and says, “The human nature which he took of the Virgin was as the shrine, house, or temple in which his immaculate Deity condescended to dwell.” The natural inference from this is, that as this shrine, house, or temple had no glory, being in the “likeness of sinful flesh,” the glory which the disciples saw was the glory of that immaculate Deity which condescended to dwell in it. No; we are told it was that glory which “John saw, in company with Peter and James,” at the transfiguration. This is perfectly gratuitous; nothing is afforded in proof; and it is directly contradicted in the very next page, where he observes, very truly, “While God dwelt in the tabernacle among the Jews, the Priests saw his glory; and while Jesus dwelt among men, his glory was manifested in his gracious words and miraculous acts.” What glory, then, was that which was manifested by miracles, but his divine glory, the glory of a nature superior to his body, the mere shrine in which he dwelt, and to which higher nature the Evangelist gives the title “only-begotten Son?” Dr. Clarke himself has thus given up the point in the same note in which he wrestles with it.

But the argument from the use of this term does not terminate here. If it be used to express the production of the body of our Lord by the immediate power of God, it is a false term: The Son of Mary was not, in this sense, the “only-begotten of the Father;” for Adam was also immediately formed by God, without human interposition, and, for that reason, is called, by St. Luke, “the son of God.” It is, therefore, in exclusive reference to his divine nature that Christ can be truly entitled “the only-begotten of the Father.”

In the other passages where this term occurs, it has scarcely less emphasis; though the two natures of Christ are not, as in the former, put in opposition. John iii. 16 may be an instance for the rest: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,” &c. Let us allow, that the whole compound nature of Christ is here spoken of, under the term “Son;”

and let the argument just adduced, from the use of the term "only-begotten," be put out of sight, yet the force of this important text, as an expression of God's love to the world, depends upon the use of that term as the designation of the divine nature of Christ. The circumstance in the text which most strongly and affectingly marks the love of God to us, is not merely that he gave to the world a Saviour, but that he gave his only-begotten Son as that Saviour. It is this which, to use Dr. Clarke's own words, has "put an eternity of meaning into the particle *οὗτω*, 'so,' and left a subject for everlasting contemplation, wonder, and praise, to angels and men." But if "the only-begotten Son" be used as the designation of the human nature, where is the emphatic tenderness of the passage? Was that so eminently dear to God that the giving of a human being involved, so to speak, such a sacrifice of paternal feeling? I, at least, cannot discover it; and I think I may appeal to every heart which beats in unison with this passage, whether the effect of such an interpretation be not to weaken its power upon the feelings; whether, by ceasing to consider Christ as a divine Son, and the object of the boundless love of a divine and everlasting Father, the love of God to our fallen world does not lose much of its unutterable tenderness, and affecting expression? The love of Christ remains precisely the same; but the love of the Father, is the emphasis of that in the least heightened by the gift of an only-begotten Son, if that Son, as Son, were merely human? It is by the existence of the tender relations of Father and Son, in the first and second Persons of the Trinity, that the love which redeemed the guilty is heightened as much beyond our conception, as the love of the Father to the Son is beyond it. It is this which renders the sacrifice of Isaac a proper, though a faint, type of the love of the everlasting Father; and it is this that crowds an infinity of meaning into the particle *οὗτω*, "so:" "God so loved the world." "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Upon the comparatively cold interpretation of this text which must consistently follow from Dr. Clarke's theory, our perception of the love of God the Father, I think, would be unspeakably weakened, and our attention be chiefly,

perhaps exclusively, concentrated on the love of the Son himself ; which would be most contrary to every natural impression which the words of this text are adapted to convey. It would be nothing in reply, to urge that the divine nature of Christ could not suffer pain ; and therefore his being given as a divine Son implies no violation of the tenderness of a Father. If it suffered no pain, it suffered something ; of this there are mysterious, and, from the nature of the thing, only mysterious, indications in Scripture ; but brief as are these notices, they are strong and emphatic : “ He emptied himself ; ” “ made himself of no reputation ; ” and though “ equal with God,” became “ obedient,” and, therefore, truly “ a servant.” This, then, is the manifestation of the love of God the Father, that he “ so loved the world,” as, for its redemption, to humble and abase this Son, his “ only-begotten.” “ He spared not his own Son.”

I find another scriptural argument in favour of the doctrine, in the application of the term “ Father ” to the first Person in the adorable Trinity. When divinity is spoken of without any reference to the peculiar and mysterious mode of his existence in three Persons, Father is one of those common terms of emphatic and encouraging meaning by which God has condescended to represent himself to man. But it is worthy of notice, that when the awful veil which shrouds the Incomprehensible is, in part, withdrawn by the Spirit of revelation, and we are permitted to glance at the ineffable manner in which he subsists ; when the three divine hypostases are exhibited, in mysterious distinction and unity, and names are solemnly given to each ; “ The Father ” is the high and expressive distinction of the first. Thus, in the authorized form of baptism into the new and finished dispensation, communicated by Christ to his Apostles, and inserted in their commission ; a form in which the name of God is written by himself ; where he has “ passed before us and proclaimed it ; ” where he has perfected the revelation of a Trinity of Persons in the one name and essence of one God ; and where terms, not only of the most expressive import, but of the utmost precision, were to be expected, as they were to present the true God in the exact



views which every convert from the worship of false gods was to form of him, all figurative and accommodating language, for that reason, being excluded ; the three Persons are thus distinctly and emphatically designated : “ Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The inquiry, then, is, why the first Person in the Godhead is thus called the Father, with relation to a Son, in a case where there is a distinct consideration of the three ? The first Person, as the first Person, is called the Father ; and for this no reason can, I think, be given, except that he is the “ Father ” of the divine nature “ of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The terms “ Father ” and “ Son ” here are exact correlatives ; the first Person is the Father, the second is the Son of that first Person : But of the human nature of Jesus, the first Person is not the Father ; for the sacred temple of our Lord’s body was produced by the Holy Ghost, the third Person. Yet is the first Person, though in that Person not the creator of the humanity of our Lord, still the Father, the Father of the Son Christ ; and if a Father, the reason of the appellation is only to be found in the doctrine which Dr. Clarke would disprove. It follows, therefore, that to deny the eternal filiation of the second Person in the Trinity, is to deny the essential paternity of the first ; and, by the denial, to take away all meaning from the first of those correlative terms which are to be pronounced as “ the name,” the descriptive name, of God, to every new convert to the Christian faith.

Nor is the term “ Son of God ” applied to Christ merely with reference to his miraculous production ; or used in those passages in which it can have no such reference, only in consequence of a common interchange of the appellations of each nature. Such an interchange of names and titles I readily allow ; but there are passages to which this rule of interpretation will not apply ; passages which, by no fair criticism, can be made to have a consistent meaning upon this scheme ; passages in which the superior and inferior natures are contemplated, either in opposition or in distinction ; and where the term “ Son of God ” is the denomination which the Spirit

of inspiration has given to the superior nature, and which, for that reason, I think, disprove Dr. Clarke's position, that there is no express enunciation of the doctrine of the divine Sonship in the holy Scriptures. And here you will observe, that we have at least one advantage over the learned Commentator. To make his assertion good, he ought, in fairness, to examine every passage in which the appellation "Son of God" occurs, and prove, that in no one of them is it given to the divine nature of Christ, considered in contradistinction to his humanity; whilst, if those who take the other side of the question can prove, that in only one passage Christ is called "the Son of God," with express and distinguishing reference to his divine nature, the point is gained. As Dr. Clarke will himself allow, that there is no passage which denies the doctrine of the eternal filiation, it follows, that, in however many other senses the term may be taken, they are not contradictory to that one text, if one only can be found in the sacred record, in which the divinity of the Son of God, as a Son, is asserted; whilst, on the other hand, whatever texts he may find, in which the use of the term is restricted to the human nature, they cannot shield that general conclusion which he has hastily drawn from them, from being opposed and swept away by evidence directly contradictory. If we cannot establish the eternal Sonship of Christ, as the express doctrine of Scripture, no man can bring evidence from Scripture to contradict it: After all, it would be left as a matter of inference; whilst, if the doctrine be expressly established, the notion Dr. Clarke has attempted to introduce among us is disproved and destroyed.

I have, however, more than one text to offer to your attention, not less decisive than those I have already adduced. A passage, in which the appellation "Son of God" most clearly appears to me to be used expressly to characterize the divine nature of Christ, and therefore expressly to prove the disputed doctrine, occurs in Romans i. 3, 4: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection

from the dead." A very few remarks will be sufficient to point out the force of this passage. The Apostle, it is to be observed, is not speaking of what Christ is officially, but of what he is personally and essentially ; for the truth of all his official claims depends upon the truth of his personal ones. If he be a divine Person, he is every thing else he assumes to be. He is, therefore, considered by the Apostle distinctly in his two natures. As a man, he was flesh, of the seed of David, and a son of David ; in a superior nature he was divine, and the Son of God. To prove that he was of the seed of David, no evidence was necessary but the Jewish genealogies ; to prove him divine, or, as the Apostle chooses to express it, "the Son of God," evidence of a higher kind was necessary ; and it was given in his resurrection from the dead. That "declared" him "to be the Son of God with power ;" or powerfully determined and marked him out to be the Son of God, a divine Person. That an opposition is expressed between what Christ was according to the flesh, and what he was according to a higher nature, must be allowed, or there is no force in the Apostle's observation ; and equally clear it must be, that the nature put in opposition to the fleshly nature, can be no other than the divine nature of Christ, the apostolic designation of which is, "the Son of God." According to Dr. Clarke's view of the meaning of this term, this opposition would be lost, and the argument of the Apostle destroyed. It would make him say, that Christ was of the seed of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God according to the flesh ; but the manifest opposition is between the flesh, and some higher nature ; between what he was as a man, and what he was as more than man ; a decisive indication of the divinity of our Lord, which the theory of Dr. Clarke utterly sinks and annihilates. Here, then, I think, whatever may be the sense of the phrase, "according to the Spirit of holiness," (for whether it refer to the divine nature of our Lord, or to the agency of the Holy Spirit in raising him from the dead, it does not affect the argument, because it does not affect the contrast in the text,) is a passage in which the two natures of Christ are placed in distinction, and even in opposition ; and of the higher

or divine nature, it is expressly affirmed, that it is "the Son of God." \*

\* Though I have not, in the above remarks, attempted to confirm the argument by the phrase, "according to the Spirit of holiness," because of the disagreeing views of Commentators, I have myself no doubt but that it is equivalent to, "according to his divine nature." Because of the opposition stated by the Apostle between what Christ was, *κατα*, "according to," in respect of, "the flesh;" and his being "declared the Son of God with power, *κατα*, according to," in respect of, "the Spirit of holiness;" Mac-knight, following Locke and many others, interprets "the Spirit of holiness," to mean the divine nature of Christ, as the flesh signifies his whole human nature. To this Schleusner adds his authority, *sub voce*, *αγιωσυνη*: *Summa Dei majestas et perfectio*, Rom. i. 4, *κατα Πνευμα αγιωσυνης quoad vim suam et majestatem divinam. Similiter in vers. Alex. non solum Hebr. הוּדָה, Psalm cxlv. 4, 5, sed etiam תוֹשֵׁב־קֶדֶשׁ respondet, Psalm xcvi. 12.* In this view the passage is even stronger in favour of the sense given above. Against this, Doddridge, though a believer in the eternal Sonship of Christ, observes, "It seems to me so little agreeable to the style of Scripture in general, to call the divine nature of Christ, the Spirit of holiness, or the Holy Spirit, that, highly as I esteem the many learned and accurate Commentators who have given it this turn, I rather refer it to the operation of the Spirit of God, in the production of Christ's body, by which means the opposition between *κατα σαρκא* and *κατα Πνευμα* will be preserved; the one referring to the materials acted upon, the other to the divine and miraculous Agent." The contrast is, however, by no means preserved by this interpretation; and to give any force to the Apostle's argument, on the view taken of the passage by Doddridge, it ought to be shown, that the resurrection of Christ from the dead proved that his human nature was formed by the agency of the Holy Spirit, more eminently than it proved any other of his high claims. Another objection to this interpretation is, that it narrows the proofs of the resurrection, to the demonstration, that the human nature of Christ was supernaturally formed in the womb of the Virgin, which might have occurred to a person not divine; whereas it was evidently intended to be a proof of his divinity and equality with the Father. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." "I lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." No creature could assume this; but it was assumed by Christ, and justified by the resurrection. If the resurrection of Christ proved him divine, it proved every thing else respecting him; if it principally proved only that his body was formed by the Holy Spirit, it did not necessarily prove his divinity. The sense of the Apostle appears to me, therefore, to be this: Though Christ was of the seed of David according to the flesh, yet his resurrection declared him to be more than a human descendant from David, even a divine Person, *κατα*, "according to" another nature; that is, the "holy and glorious Spirit," which was united to the human body and soul. There is not much force in the objection, that the phrase, "the Spirit of holiness,"

The way in which Dr. Clarke, in his note on this place, avoids the force of the argument drawn from the evident contrast in the text, between that nature of Christ which was of "the seed of David according to the flesh," and that which bears the designation, "Son of God," is entirely to overlook the fact, that the Apostle places the one in opposition to the other; and in a loose paraphrase he informs us, that to be "declared the Son of God," means, that Christ was declared to be the Messiah; and as this is the usual manner in which not only those who, with Dr. Clarke, oppose the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ, but those also who deny his divinity, endeavour to dispose of the phrase, "Son of God," denying that it implies any idea of Deity, and asserting that it is merely an official or a human personal designation, it shall have a brief consideration. It is necessary to this discussion to examine, whether the term "Son of God" was considered a synonyme of the appellation "Messiah," among the first disciples of Jesus, and among the Jews, with their Priests and rulers.

The calling of Nathanael will afford a striking instance of the sense in which the term was used by the disciples. The history occurs John i. 44, *ad finem*. Nathanael's acknowledgment of Jesus is given in these words: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." Here Dr. Clarke, and others, consider the titles "Son of God," and "King of Israel," as terms of the same import, and both as designating the Messiahship. But why do they not also consider the term "Rabbi" as synonymous with the other two, and as an appropriate appellation of Messiah? If a distinct idea be attached to the term "Rabbi," Master, Teacher, or however it may be rendered, what reason can be given, that the terms "Son of God," and "King of Israel," should involve precisely one idea, differently expressed? It

in this sense, is an unusual one. St. Paul is not unfrequently unusual in his expressions; but here he had, at least, the authority of the LXX., who use *αγιωσυνη*, as Schleusner has observed, as the rendering for *הוֹרָה*, (Psalm cxlv. 5,) a word which signifies the glory, majesty, honour of the divine nature.

appears much more consistent with the rapid brevity of these expressions of overflowing feeling, to consider them all as conveying very distinct ideas. This, I grant, if it stood alone, would be rather opinion than argument ; but it has strong confirmation in the circumstances of the history. If it be maintained, that the appellation " Son of God " is used as synonymous with " Messiah ; " and that the proof, that Jesus, as to his human nature, was miraculously produced by God, was the proof of his Messiahship ; then, before the title " Son of God " could be given to him by Nathanael, he must have known that " he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary." But nothing of this is in the history. He appears to have been an utter stranger to Jesus, and to the circumstances of his life, before Philip met with him, and declared that he and others had found the Messiah. Nay, the very terms in which Philip announced him were such as entirely to put out of sight his miraculous conception, with which, apparently, Philip himself was at that time unacquainted. " We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." So little share had the miraculous conception in convincing Philip that Jesus was the Messiah, that he announces him to Nathanael as " the son of Joseph ; " which he could scarcely have done, had he even known that Joseph was only his reputed father, if the miraculous conception had been previously urged upon himself in proof of the claims of Him whose call, " Follow me," he had obeyed. To Nathanael, however, this proof was wholly unknown ; and yet, without any acquaintance with it, even in opposition to the contrary information, that Jesus was " the son of Joseph," did he pronounce him to be the Son of God. What, then, led to Nathanael's conversion ? Not any information of the manner in which the body of Christ was formed ; it was not with reference to that circumstance, that he saluted him as " the Son of God," but, as the context shows, with reference to his having exercised a divine attribute. " Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Christ saw Nathanael, when he was certain that no human being

saw him ; and knew his secret acts, when he had shut himself out from all the world. This proof of omniscience at once convinced Nathanael, that Jesus was more than man, that he was truly divine ; and, under this idea, the most prominent one certainly in his mind at the time, after the common salutation of courtesy to superior persons bearing a sacred character, “ Rabbi,” he confesses that divinity of which he had received such a demonstration, under the appellation “ Son of God,” and then immediately hastens to acknowledge what he, for this reason, was convinced must be true, because professed by a divine Person who could not deceive mankind, that he was Messias, “ the King of Israel.”

I find what appears to me another proof, that the title ‘ Son of God ’ is not of identical meaning with “ Messias,” in Peter’s celebrated confession of Christ, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matt. xvi. 16.) Let any one inquire the reason of that interrogation which produced a reply for which a special benediction was pronounced upon Peter. It could scarcely be to draw forth a confession from the disciples, that Jesus was the Messias ; for that they had confessed from the time they had left all to follow him ; they confessed it at the time by remaining with him. The reason for following him was that they believed him to be the Messiah. But their belief in this did not necessarily involve, in the first stages of their discipleship, the belief of his divinity. That the Jews did not generally, in the time of Christ, expect their Messiah to be a divine Person, I shall presently adduce some evidence to establish ; and they who had so grossly misunderstood all that was spiritual in the predictions of the Old Testament ; who had lost all understanding of the Mosaic types ; of the doctrine of atonement, and pardon through faith in a universal propitiation ; may well be supposed to have been blind to the meaning of those scriptures which array Messiah in the awful attributes of absolute divinity. In this grossness of conception, we know, by many instances, the disciples themselves were involved. With his divinity they were most probably, at their first call, little, if at all, acquainted. None of them, upon their first vocation, had so clear a manifestation

of it as Nathanael ; and none of them probably had at the time so high a moral preparation to receive it as he who was declared “an Israelite indeed,” by the sentence of Him who saw him “under the fig-tree,” and was therefore able to read his heart. But at the time the question, “Whom say ye that I am?” was put, they had for a considerable time followed him. They had seen many acts of his divine power and majesty ; and now, therefore, he requires from them a higher confession than that of his simple Messiahship ; a confession of his Godhead. The question is put to them in a remarkable form, and one which certainly was rather calculated to repress than to entice the answer. “Whom say men that I the Son of Man am?” I, who appear before you, obviously a human being like yourselves ? And Peter, after the disciples had given the opinions of others, said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Here there is the same opposition between the terms “Son of Man,” and “Son of God,” as in the passage quoted from the Romans, which expresses what Christ was according to the flesh, and what he was in a higher nature ; and in both places he is designated “the Son of God.” Upon this confession Jesus rejoins, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” That is, as I understand it, this opinion was not obtained from the sentiments generally received among the Jews, but by the influence of God upon Peter’s mind, giving him a right understanding, and a docile disposition to yield to the demonstrations of this high doctrine. But what were these demonstrations ? This is a very important question in the discussion. If the acknowledgment that Christ was “the Son of the living God” be taken in Dr. Clarke’s view ; if the reason for the use of the term “Son of God” were his miraculous conception, it would follow that Peter believed Jesus to be the Messiah, because he knew him to be miraculously conceived of the Holy Ghost. But if this were so prominent and emphatic a proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, that, according to Dr. Clarke’s note on Romans i. 3, 4, it was the great object of the resurrection of Christ to demonstrate it, and in this sense to “declare him the Son



of God with power," can the Doctor account for it, can any man account for it, that in no part of the evangelical history, nor in any of the discourses of Jesus with his disciples, is this circumstance ever urged upon them in proof of our Lord's claims? No; though Mary, the virgin mother, was with them, and might have been referred to; though they doubted not the truth of their Master's words, but in this, as in other respects, would have received such a declaration from him with humble submission; I cannot recollect an instance in which, by this evidence, he attempted to reach their judgment. On the contrary, the class of proofs to which he referred was of another kind. He referred to his works; and upon these he rested his claims to call God his Father, and himself the Son of the living God. Take, for instance, these explicit words, addressed to Philip: "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me," not because I was miraculously conceived,—this is not so much as hinted at in justification of this assumption of filiation,—but "for the very works' sake." (John xiv. 11.) I think, then, that I am fully warranted in concluding, that the title "Son of God," as applied to Christ by himself and by his disciples, is one which involves the idea of his divinity, from the very species of proof to which he resorts for their conviction; it is a kind of proof, the proof of miracles, which brings the term "Son of God" into constant collocation with ideas of supreme divinity, and whose object could only be to demonstrate him to be a divine Person under that appellation. Of the steady and uniform use of this appellation in the sense of true and absolute divinity by the disciples, an interesting example is also afforded in Matt. xiv. 33. Jesus had walked on the sea to the ship in which were his disciples. Peter, by his permission, goes to meet him; he begins to be afraid of the boisterous waves, and to sink; he is upheld by the hand of his Lord; and the astonishing miracle is exhibited to those in the ship, of the Master and his favoured disciple treading the yielding, wavering element, as on solid ground. And "they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." What idea, in such solemn and impressive circumstances, could they

attach to the term? Is it probable that there should have been the most transient reference in their minds to the manner in which our Lord's human nature was produced? Or, if there were, could this term have suggested itself to them as at all a proper one to express their deep and ample conviction of his superhuman power, had they not been accustomed to use it as the designation of supreme divinity?

Another instance of the firm association of the term "Son of God" with the notion of Deity, is given in John ix., in the case of the man born blind, whom Jesus healed. After Christ had directed him to wash in the pool of Siloam, he appears not to have met with him again till after his examination before the Pharisees. In that examination he was asked, "What sayest thou of him?" "He said, He is a Prophet." He does not say, "the Messiah;" and his boldness before his haughty examiners leaves no doubt, but that if he had heard that Jesus had professed to be the Messiah, he would have professed his faith in him in that character. Jesus was evidently a stranger to him; but from the miracle, he believed him to be a Prophet, and a good man; for he justly argued, "God heareth not sinners." There is sufficient reason, therefore, to conclude, that the man was ignorant, both of his miraculous conception, and of his professing to be the Messiah. Certainly his acknowledgment that Jesus was "a Prophet" did not imply a confession that he was Messiah, as Dr. Clarke has observed in his note on the passage. But when Christ afterwards met him, he proposes to him the naked question, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He does not say, "Messiah, the Son of God;" he gives him no information as to his miraculous conception; and even if we were to allow that the term "Son of God" was understood by the man to comprehend the claim of the Messiahship, of which no proof is in the history; yet he could not consider him Messiah, Son of God, because he was born of a virgin. On the contrary, when he said, "Lord, I believe," he clearly understood the title "Son of God" in the sense of divinity; for it is added, "he worshipped him." He worshipped him as the Son of God, a divine Person; not as having been conceived out of the ordinary way,—for he

could not argue his divinity from an event of which he knew nothing ; but he was convinced of it from his having wrought a miracle. And here again I am happy, as in the text of the First Epistle of John, to be able to plead the authority of Dr. Clarke against himself ; for on this act of grateful adoration he observes, “ Never having seen Jesus before, but simply knowing that a person of that name had opened his eyes, he had only considered him as a holy man, and a Prophet ; but now that he sees and hears him, he is convinced of his divinity, and glorifies him as his Saviour.” Yet, be it observed, that this ample view of his divinity was conveyed to him by the single question, “ Dost thou believe on the Son of God ?” which Dr. Clarke, in other places, contends, is the appellation of the human nature, of the man only.

I hope, then, that I have made it clear, that the disciples of Christ did not use the terms “ Son of God,” and “ Messiah,” as titles of the same import. Of this, however, the evidence is complete,—that they used the former term so as to involve the idea of absolute divinity ; a circumstance which I shall presently more particularly notice. In the mean time, let us consult the Evangelists for evidence, to show that the terms “ Messiah,” and “ Son of God,” were understood to be of very different import by the Jews in general ; a fact which will go still further to prove that Dr. Clarke is not warranted in considering them as conveying the same meaning, in the popular language of the Jews. The question, whether the Jews expected a human or a divine Messiah, has been much agitated by learned men ; and very great names are arranged on each side. “ But though,” to use the words of Basnage, who has carefully examined the opinions of the Jews on this subject, “ it is our interest to be of their opinion who believe that the Jews in our Lord’s time expected the second Person of the Trinity as the Messiah, because it strongly concludes against the anti-trinitarians, there appears no conclusive evidence in its favour.” That the Messiah of the law and the Prophets is a divine Person, stands on unshaken proofs ; but this doctrine appears to have been lost to the body of a people, whose chief sects, the Pharisees and Sadducees, were notori-

ously not merely bad interpreters, but gross perverters, of the oracles they acknowledged to be divine. Among the spiritual persons who remained, better views, though perhaps considerably obscured, would be found ; but they were few, and too little known to exert any influence, and give any direction to the public sentiment. The mistake of those Divines who have attributed to the Jews at large correct opinions as to the Messiah, appears to have arisen, first, from their attaching too much importance to the Platonic revellings of imagination in Philo ; who, though he uses the term “ Son of God,” is said, on what I take to be competent authority, no where to apply it to the Jewish Messiah ; and in none of the numerous passages in his writings I have read, have I found it so applied ; And, secondly, in taking the use of the term “ Son of God,” among the disciples of Christ, who certainly applied it in the sense of divinity, as indicative of the common opinion of the Jews as to the Messiah they expected. They, however, forgot that the disciples were instructed and illuminated persons ; that a moral change had been wrought in their habits ; that their minds were enlightened by special influence ; “ that flesh and blood had not revealed it unto them, but the Father which is in heaven.” And the views under which the disciples considered Messiah can no more be used in proof of what were the commonly-received opinions of their nation, than the application of them to Jesus would prove, that the body of the Jewish nation admitted his particular claim to that character. Here, then, we may lay down the following positions :—That the disciples of Christ allowed him to be Messiah, and Son of God ; that the Jews doubted whether he were the Messiah, and frequently resorted to him to obtain evidence of it ; that occasionally, in great numbers, they professed to be convinced, though waveringly, of his claim to that character ; on one occasion they would have proclaimed him King ; but that, at all times, they steadily resisted his claim to be the Son of God, —his profession that God was his proper Father ; accused him of blasphemy for this assumption ; took up stones to stone him ; and, at last, brought him to trial, and condemned him on this charge. The conclusions I would draw from these

positions are, that the assumption of Messiahship, and of the title "Son of God," was, in the view of the Jews of our Lord's time, entirely distinct; the latter being considered by them to involve a claim of divinity: And that these terms were considered as of distinct import by the disciples; though, in their faith, they applied, as was due, both of them to him, and confessed him to be the Messiah, and the Son of the living God, —a divine Person. In illustration and confirmation of these positions, I shall make some quotations from an able discussion of the subject in a modern work; but for the argument in its most extended form, I refer to the work itself.\*

"Christ was arraigned, it appears, before the two different tribunals of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and the Roman Governor. In the latter he was accused of sedition, and acquitted; (John xviii. 38; xix. 4;) in the former, he was accused of blasphemy, and condemned; (Matt. xxvi. 65, 66; †) and though the judicial power of the Jewish court, at that time, was much abridged, the Roman Governor was prevailed on, by the importunity of the Jews, to ratify and execute the sentence of the Sanhedrim. The conduct of the Jews on this occasion appears to have been determined by the different claims which Jesus had advanced. He had sometimes simply declared himself Christ, or Messiah, namely, the King of Israel, foretold by their Prophets; and sometimes Christ, the Son of God. The assumption of the first of these titles, combined with another circumstance, that of being sometimes followed by great multitudes of people, might seem treason against the sovereignty of the Romans; and of this combination of alleged guilt he was accused before Pilate: 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.' 'He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.' (Luke xxiii. 2, 5.) But to discover what they conceived to be his real offence, we must refer

\* An Illustration of the Method of Explaining the New Testament, by the Early Opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ. By W. Wilson, B. D.

† See also the corresponding account of Mark and Luke.

to the proceedings of their own tribunal. There, we are informed, after the court had in vain attempted to prove him guilty of blasphemy, by the rules of evidence laid down in the Mosaic law, that a confession of his supposed guilt was drawn from him by the High Priest's examination. With respect to the examination of witnesses, St. Matthew has related, that 'the council sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; yet found they none, though many false witnesses came.' (Matt. xxvi. 59, 60.) According to St. Mark, 'the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none; for many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.' (Mark xiv. 55, 56.\*) The obscurity of the first Evangelist is well explained by the second. The Sanhedrim, it appears, sought for witnesses to convict Jesus of a capital crime; on examination they proved to be false witnesses, either by the inconsistency or the weakness of their evidence; and therefore, by the law of Moses, could have no weight with the court. By the Mosaic law, the concurrent testimony of two or three witnesses was necessary to convict any one of a capital crime; (Num. xxxv. 30; Deut. xvii. 6;) and at last came two witnesses, to testify that Jesus had threatened to destroy the temple, and build it again in three days: But either a slight disagreement in their testimony annulled the force of their evidence, or, what is more probable, the fact substantiated was not thought to amount to a capital offence. Testimony sufficient to convict a culprit might be said to be true, insufficient testimony, false, in the eye of the law. In this language St. John remarks, 'It is written in your law, the testimony of two men is true;' and it must be according to the same sort of phraseology that these witnesses are called 'false witnesses;' for the only fact mentioned to which they deposed appears to have been strictly true, but not sufficient to prove the crime of blasphemy. Having failed in establishing this charge, the High Priest asks, however, for a reply; expecting, perhaps, to meet with some objectionable matter in a long defence. Having failed in this also, he pro-

\* *Ἰσται αἱ μαρτυρίαι ἐκ ἧσαν.* Perhaps the true translation is, "their testimonies were insufficient." See Grotius on the term *ισται*.

ceeds to examine Jesus, in order to draw from him an acknowledgment of his supposed guilt; and this he effected. According to St. Luke, our Saviour was asked two questions: In Matthew and Mark these are expressed in one, probably for the sake of brevity; and from these two Evangelists it cannot be certainly known, whether he was condemned for declaring himself the Christ, or the Son of God, or for asserting that he should afterwards appear with glory at the right hand of God. The doubt, however, is removed in the narrative of Luke: ‘As soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the Chief Priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go. Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he saith unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further \* witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.’ (Luke xxii. 66—71.) ‘The High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.’ (Matt. xxvi. 65.) The real ground of his condemnation also appears from a circumstance mentioned by St. John, in his account of the second trial. The Jews exclaimed to Pilate, ‘We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.’ (John xix. 7.) It appears, then, by very full and decisive evidence, that Jesus was accused by the Jews, before the Roman Governor, for assuming the title of the Christ, or Messiah, a King; and that, in a Jewish court, he was adjudged guilty of the capital crime of blasphemy, by the Mosaic law, for simply declaring himself the Son of God. His claim to this title was not set aside by any additional evidence; but

\* From this expression it appears, consistently with the whole account of the trial, that till then further evidence was thought necessary. This may also be collected from the silence of St. Luke, no less than by his testimony; he has not even mentioned the examination of the witnesses.

the simple assumption of the title not only invalidated his pretensions to the character of the Messiah, but was in itself the crime for which he suffered.

“To prove that Jesus Christ was tried and condemned by the Mosaic law, it is sufficient to observe, that his trial was before a Jewish court. Their proceedings, however, as described by the three first Evangelists, and a declaration of some of their people, as recorded by St. John, would place the matter beyond all question, were there any preceding doubt. They evidently proceeded by the rule of evidence laid down in Num. xxxv. 30, and Deut. xvii. 6. Afterwards, indeed, before Pilate, his prosecutors did not bring forward, at first, the crime of which they really believed him guilty; because it was not likely to influence a Roman Governor, who might have no respect for Jewish laws. They accused him, at first, of sedition, for declaring himself Messiah, a King; but the Governor perceived this to be an invidious charge; he knew that for envy they had accused him of this crime; and they were at length compelled to advert to the real grounds of their prosecution: ‘We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.’ Happily for the cause of religion and truth, their law has come down to our times: And it is hardly necessary to observe, that it is not a capital crime by any statute in the whole Mosaic code, to assume the title and character of the Messiah. The oral law, in the time of Christ, may be said to have had nearly the same relation to the Pentateuch, in the opinion of the Jews, that our common law bears to our statutes; they supposed both to have the same origin, and equal authority; and some parts of the one were, unquestionably, useful, as an explanation and supplement to the other. The traditionary maxims, which constituted the second law, were digested and published by a learned and zealous Jew, about one hundred and eighty years after the trial of Christ;\* at a time when Christianity

\* The Mishna was published by R. Juda, about the year 220; but the Jews had employed themselves in collecting the traditions and customs which form the body of this second law, from the time of their second destruction under Adrian. See Allix’s Judgment of the Jewish Church, c. xxiii., p. 395.



had diffused itself into every part of the vast extent of the Roman empire ; when the Jews had practised every art to defame the new religion, and to apologize for their own conduct towards Christ and Christians. No precept or rule, therefore, in the oral law, however inconsiderable, that might in any way tend to justify their conduct, would be left out of this collection. It is not, however, a capital crime, or any crime, by any rule found in the Mishna, to assume the title and character of the Messiah ; and, as the Sanhedrim condemned Jesus by their law, and the Jewish people approved the sentence, because he professed to be the Son of God, they must have conceived him to have laid claim, in these words, to some other title and character, against which their law was really directed. But if the Pentateuch and Mishna be examined with the utmost care, no statute or maxim will be found in either, which the Jews could mistake so far as to conceive it capable of application to this case, unless they supposed Jesus, in declaring himself the Son of God, to claim divinity ; none of their laws appear to have any relation to this case on any other supposition. If, indeed, our Lord was understood to have advanced this claim ; having then generally lost all notion of a trinity of Persons in the divine unity, and having never entertained the idea of the Son of God invested with human flesh, they would probably believe him guilty of a breach of the first commandment ; and his case would be supposed to fall under the operation of some of the penal laws in the Pentateuch, enacted to enforce its observance.

“ To express the whole argument in a few words : Jesus Christ was condemned to death by the Jewish law, for acknowledging himself the Son of God. The phrase ‘ Son of God ’ admits, and merely admits, of several different acceptations. The declaration must have been thought innocent, in the eye of the law, in any of these significations except one ; in that it was liable to be accounted a capital crime ; it might be thought a breach of the first commandment ; in that sense it must, therefore, have been understood by the Jews.

“ The question before us, it must be remembered, is this : Whether Jesus, under the external disadvantages of an humble

birth and appearance, was condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrim for professing to be their Messiah, or for claiming a higher nature than they attributed to the great personage whom they expected under that title ; whether he was condemned for indirectly declaring himself the Christ, the Son of David, and King of Israel, or for asserting his divinity. And, in the discussion of this question, it seems reasonable to judge of the motives of the Sanhedrim by those of the Jewish people ; to explain the conduct of one body of Jews by the conduct of others ; and to form our opinions on a connected and comparative view of the whole. If the Magistrate and the subject, the learned and the ignorant, the inhabitant of the city and of the country, at different times, and in various situations, appear to have been incensed against our Saviour for asserting his divinity, without showing equal displeasure when they conceived him to speak of his divine mission only as Messiah ; we are then furnished with a forcible reason, in addition to those already stated, for believing that this was at least the principal, if not the only, ground of his condemnation. And it may be added, that such a perfect uniformity in the interpretation of his words by several different bodies of men of his own time and country, who all spoke the same language, were conversant about the same objects, to whom his figures of speech and modes of instruction would be familiar ; such uniformity in the interpretation of his words, by so many different bodies of contemporaries, affords a decisive proof that his meaning was not misunderstood.

“ In order to judge whether the Sanhedrim would condemn Jesus, appearing, as he did appear, for teaching the doctrine of his divinity, or for simply declaring himself the Messiah ; we may first appeal to the conduct of a body of Jews of Jerusalem, described in the fifth chapter of St. John. It is there related that he spoke of his divine mission as Messiah : ‘ Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness of the truth : But I have greater witness than that of John ; for the works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me :’ And no mention is made of any disapprobation expressed on this occasion. But a short time before this, when he had appeared to

the same people, to call God his Father, in a more strict and proper sense than was consistent with the notion of his simple humanity, the sacred historian has recorded that they sought to put him to death : ‘ Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, not only because he had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his proper Father ; Πατέρα ιδιον ελεγε τον Θεον ; making himself equal with God.’ (John v. 18.)

“ Some inhabitants of Jerusalem, according to this account, sought to kill him, because he called God his Father in such a sense as to make himself equal with God ; and he was afterwards condemned to death by the Magistrates of Jerusalem, because he made himself the Son of God. We may judge of the interpretation of the latter phrase by that of the former, one being equivalent to the other ; and conclude, with considerable probability, that he was, on both occasions, understood to call God his Father in such a sense as to claim divinity ; that, on this account, they at one time sought to kill him ; and afterwards, on the same account, and not because he called himself the Messiah, condemned him to the cross.

“ In order to explain the conduct of the Sanhedrim by that of the Jewish people, our second appeal may be to a body of Jews, collected in one of the courts of the temple of Jerusalem. (John viii.) In the conference of Christ with the Jews on this occasion, after having openly spoken of his divine mission, and having alluded to his divine nature without being understood by his hearers,\* he at length addresses

\* In this conference with the Jews he declares himself a teacher, “ the light of the world ;” and appeals to his miracles to confirm this and his other claims. He speaks of his Father that sent him, bearing witness of him ; and addresses the Jews in these words : “ Ye neither know me nor my Father : If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.” Here, it will perhaps be said, is a plain allusion to his divine origin ; and yet no violence was offered to him by the Jews. The Evangelist has observed it, as if it were a remarkable circumstance : “ While Jesus spake these words, no man laid hands on him ;” (John viii. 20 ;) and he soon after even adds, “ As he spake these words, many believed on him.” (Verse 30.) But he has solved the difficulty, verse 27 : “ They understood not that he spake to them of the Father ;” that is, of God being his Father. They believed him to speak of one who was strictly and properly his father ; but had no conception, on this occasion, that he intimated his Father to be God.

them in these remarkable words : ‘ Verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.’ This sentence seems to contain no allusion to the office of the Messiah ; but he directly claims in it eternity of existence, an attribute of God alone ; and, that the Jewish interpretation was the same with ours, appears not by any obscure and ambiguous words let fall on the occasion, but by a speaking action, too expressive to be misunderstood. ‘ Then took they up stones to cast at him.’ Our Saviour asserts his pre-existence ; and certain Jews immediately attempt to destroy him. Consistently with this claim, he afterwards, on his trial, professes to be, not merely the Messiah, according to the Jewish notions of their Messiah, the son of David, but the Son of God ; and the Jewish Sanhedrim, in perfect consistency with the preceding conduct of the people, unanimously pronounce him worthy of death.

“ To account for the conduct of the Sanhedrim, by comparing it with that of the people, we may appeal, in the third place, to another body of Jews collected in the temple : ‘ And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not : The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me : But ye believe not ; for ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me ; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand : My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father ; for which of those works do ye stone me ? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not ; but for blasphemy ; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.’ (John x. 23—33.)

“ In this narrative two circumstances claim our notice. When Jesus remarks, that he has already declared himself the Messiah, the observation appears to have made no uncommon

impression on his hearers ; so far from being reckoned blasphemous, it seems to have been heard without exciting more emotion than a common remark ; and it is not till he declares himself one with his Father, that they take up stones to stone him. Their words, in this case, are not less significant than their actions. They do not say, ‘ We stone thee because thou, being an humble Galilean, makest thyself the Messiah ; ’ but, ‘ We stone thee for blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.’ The motive of the Jews on this occasion is avowed in direct and explicit terms. They attempt to stone him, because, in asserting his own divinity, he was guilty of blasphemy ; and in their observations, and his answer, we distinctly see the two claims, the combination of which they conceived to form his guilt. The first and principal, according to our Saviour’s account, was, that he called himself the Son of God : ‘ Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God ? ’ The second, and that which fixed the meaning of the other, was, that he professed to be one with God, whom he had called his Father. Both were combined in the affirmation, ‘ I and my Father are one.’ The people, on this occasion, attempt to stone him for blasphemy ; and he was afterwards condemned by the Sanhedrim for the same crime. The people attempt to stone him, because he, as they alleged, being a man, made himself God, by calling himself the Son of God, and professing to be one with his Father ; and the Sanhedrim also condemned him to death, because he declared himself the Son of God. This narrative of the proceedings of the people contains a just exposition of the motives which afterwards influenced their Magistrates, and forms a valuable comment on the history of our Saviour’s trial.

“ The subsequent conduct of this same body of people is also not unworthy of attention. Our Saviour reproves them for considering him as a blasphemer, in declaring himself the Son of God ; when in their own writings Princes and rulers are sometimes, on account of their office, called gods ; and, applying the argument *à fortiori*, he intimates, that the appel-

lation would be given with a more strict propriety to him who was sanctified and sent by the Father. So far, in this expostulation, his language was doubtful. When he intimated, that the appellation would be applied with more propriety to him than to others, he might be supposed, either to allude to his divine nature, or to assert only his divine mission ; and so far he was suffered by the Jews to proceed without interruption. But when he adds, ‘If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, then though ye believe not me, yet believe the works ; That ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him,’—the Evangelist then relates, that ‘again they went about to take him.’ The strain of this expostulation appeared to them the same with that from which they had just concluded, that he, being a man, made himself God ; and though he knew that this was their interpretation, he, neither on this, nor any other similar occasion, complained of any mistake.

“ In order to judge, whether the Sanhedrim would probably condemn Jesus to death, for declaring himself the Messiah, or for asserting his divinity, we may make our fourth appeal to the conduct and language of a body of Jews in Galilee, described in the sixth chapter of St. John. Five thousand men, who had witnessed his miracles, actually acknowledge him as ‘that Prophet that should come into the world ;’ and were preparing to invest him with the kingly office, consistently with their notions of the Messiah. The next day, the same persons murmured disapprobation when he intimated, in metaphorical language, that he was more than human nature. ‘The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.’ That they understood him, on this occasion, to allude to his divinity and pre-existence, appears further from their own observation : ‘Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? How then saith he, I came down from heaven ?’ that is, We know his father and mother ; we know that he was born of human parents ; how, then, can he be of heavenly origin, as he affirms ?

“ If this case be viewed in connexion with the history

of our Saviour's trial, we may ask, whether it is probable that he would be condemned to death by Jews for advancing that claim which five thousand Jews had admitted, or that at which they had expressed their displeasure by murmurs. After he had been judged guilty by the Sanhedrim for professing to be the Son of God, had the question been proposed to these five thousand people; had they been asked, what they conceived were the grounds of his condemnation; would they have declared it their opinion, that Jesus was condemned for professing to be that Prophet who should come into the world, or for the higher, and, as they thought, the more extravagant, claim of divinity? Their language and conduct have obviated the question: They have virtually given their suffrages; and their opinion must have great weight in deciding ours.

“It is, on one occasion, related by St. John, (chap. viii. 27,) that when Christ was speaking of his Father, the people who heard him understood not that he spoke of God; and it may be reasonably supposed, that when he indirectly or obscurely advanced the claim of divinity, his meaning would be sooner discovered by men of learning than by the common people. Let the conduct of the Sanhedrim, then, be compared with that of a body of Scribes and Pharisees, assembled from every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem itself. (Luke v. 17.) Before this assembly of men of education, as well as a great multitude of the common people, he assumed and exercised the power of forgiving sins. Then certain of the Scribes said within themselves, ‘Who is this that speaketh blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God only?’ When he asserted the power of forgiving sins, on this occasion, it was at least suspected, by some of the Scribes, that his words amounted to blasphemy, the crime for which he was afterwards condemned by the great national tribunal; which was probably, for the most part, composed of Priests and Scribes. The power of forgiving sins, far from being allowed to their expected Messiah, was considered by the Scribes as appropriated to God alone; and he was afterwards condemned by the Sanhedrim for claiming a higher nature

than they admitted in the Messiah, in declaring himself the Son of God."

Proved, then, as I think it is irrefragably, that the personal term "Son of God" was understood in the common language of the Jews, as one of infinitely higher import than the official term "Messiah," it only remains to apply this circumstance to the question of the eternal Sonship. If the term "Son of God" were used with reference to the miraculous conception; then, as it was understood by the Jews and by the disciples to imply divinity, Dr. Clarke, and others on that side, must show, in order to explain and justify its use in their sense, that the miraculous conception implied the divinity of him who was thus supernaturally produced. This would be absurd. It could scarcely be an evidence of Messiahship; but could not prove what was false in fact,—that that which was born of Mary was divine, or, in other words, that the man was God. Nor was the appellation admitted by Christ, when before his accusers, with any reference to the production of his human nature. He acknowledges himself to be the Son of God, in the same sense in which the term was understood by the High Priest and others, who challenged his confession. "Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he saith unto them," confessing the fact, in their sense, with frankness, "Ye say that I am;" that is, I am that ye say. In none of his conversations with the Jews, when they were offended at this title, as implying divinity, did he ever refer to his miraculous conception, as explicatory of it; not even upon his trial was this urged as the evidence of his right to use it. In both cases the reference in proof was to his divine works; and in both cases, therefore, he assumed this title in the case of strict and proper divinity, and in reference to it. The conclusion of the whole, as applicable to the text in Romans, is, that the term "Son of God," applied to Christ by his followers, and denied him by the Jews, being a designation of his divine nature, when the Apostle affirms that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead," he spoke a language unintelligible both to Christians and to the unbelieving Jews,—for whose



use it is plain the Epistle to the Romans was also written,—if, by placing that term in opposition to what Christ was “according to the flesh,” he did not intend to affirm that he was a divine Person, and, as such, the “Son of God.”

But though I think it very clear that neither the disciples of Christ, nor the Jews of their time, considered the title “Messiah” necessarily to include divinity, and that both used the term “Son of God” to express a higher conception, yet it makes little difference in the argument as to the eternal Sonship, when the question lies with them who admit the Messiah to be a divine Person, whether the terms be considered as Perfectly synonymous, or of different import. The argument, in that case, only takes another form. We ask, “Why was Messiah, if he were acknowledged both by the disciples of Jesus, and by the Jews, to be a divine Person, called the ‘Son of God?’ Is this epithet a term expressive of humanity or of divinity?” To prove that it was given the Messiah with reference to his miraculous conception, it ought to be proved that the Jews understood that their Messiah was to be born of a virgin. Now, that this was at all a prominent opinion, and much less an opinion so prominent and decisive as the common use of the term “Son of God” among them must suppose, if used in the sense Dr. Clarke has given it, there is not the least proof; but much evidence to the contrary. For, from what source were they to derive the information? They had, it is true, a prophecy, “A virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son,” &c.; but though this be clear to us who live after the accomplishment, and who have seen the sense of the prediction fixed by the Spirit of inspiration, it could not be a clear prophecy to the Jews; it would be, indeed, to them a much more obscure prediction than almost any other so entirely and exclusively relating to Messiah in their Scriptures; there is nothing in the context to refer it to him; it is unaccompanied with any of those common notices of him which usually occur in the Prophets where he is spoken of: And even to us, had the passage not been quoted in the New Testament, it would not with certainty appear to have an application to any person or event beyond the times of Ahaz. From such a predic-

tion,—the exact explication of which, with its context, even Christian Divines have found a matter of some difficulty,—the Jews living before the fact of Christ's miraculous conception cannot be supposed to have deduced the doctrine, that Messiah would be the Son of David as to the mother, and the Son of God as to the Father, of his human nature. And as they had no sufficient means of becoming acquainted with the doctrine of the miraculous conception of their Messiah, they give no indications in the evangelic history, that it was received among them. "Jesus," says St. Luke, in giving the genealogy of our Lord, "was the supposed"—the reputed—"son of Joseph." As such, he was entered in the Jewish genealogies; and was so "supposed"—reputed—among the people. "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," was his common compellation among his countrymen. Now, if the Jews used "Messiah," and "Son of God," as synonymous terms, and the latter with respect to an expected supernatural conception of the human nature of their Messiah, how is it to be accounted for, that they never argued against the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah, that he wanted this proof of Messiahship, being the son of Joseph, and not, in this sense, the Son of God? Such an objection would have produced the proper answer,—a statement of the fact; but the objection was never made, and the correcting information was never given. It would even, perhaps, be difficult to prove that the disciples themselves knew the fact before the giving of the Spirit, who was to take of the things of Jesus and reveal them. It is probable, and that for some obvious reasons, besides the absence of all allusion to it in the discourses of Jesus, that it was among the things which "Mary kept in her heart." But whatever was the case as to the disciples, it is plain that the Jews knew it not; and the term "Son of God," as used by them, if even synonymous with "Messiah," was a designation of divinity exclusively. Thus the argument is gained both ways: If the terms "Messiah," and "Son of God," be of different meaning, it was for the assumption of the latter in the sense of divinity that Jesus was convicted of blasphemy, and it had no reference to his miraculous conception, or to the office of the Messiah, whom

the Jews still expected. If the terms are of the same import, and the Messiah is allowed to have been, in the view of the Jews, a divine Person, then their unacquaintance with the doctrine of the miraculous conception proves that, with reference to such an event, they could not use the term "Son of God." "Son of David," indeed, appears to have been their common appellation for Messiah : So when our Lord asked the Scribes, "What think ye of Messiah ? whose son is he ?" they replied, "He is the son of David."

From the note on the passage in Romans, Dr. Clarke refers us to his comment on Acts xiii. 33 ; a passage cited by St. Paul in his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch, from the second Psalm : "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ;" and informs us, that the question of the eternal Sonship of Christ is there considered at large. All the consideration I find given to it, is the assertion that the term "Son" must express the production of Christ's human nature by the Holy Ghost ; "for as to his divine nature, which is allowed to be God, it could neither be created nor begotten ;" with a repetition of the arguments in the note on Luke i. 35. This is an instance of the application of the Doctor's own canon of interpretation,—that what is contrary to reason is contrary to Scripture ; and of that prompt method of dispatching a doctrine, when it appears to the reader that it cannot be true, to which it of course leads. However, as I have not adopted the canon, I demur to the decision ; and am far from thinking that the deposition of the second Psalm, in favour of the divine Sonship, has been silenced by the note upon Acts xiii. 33. I do not, indeed, contend that the term "begotten" there—for observe, it is not "the only-begotten"—refers to the eternal filiation of the Christ of God. The evidence of Scripture is too strong in favour of the doctrine to render it at all necessary to go in search of any but clear interpretations. But notwithstanding this concession, the same conclusion may be reached by another route. If the term "begotten," here, is not to be applied to the divine nature of Christ, neither is it to be understood of the incarnation ; to which opinion Dr. Clarke inclines, though with hesitation. The sense of the passage is fixed,

firmly fixed, by the inspired Apostle who cites it : It is a prediction of the resurrection of Christ. The consideration of the whole passage is all that is necessary to ascertain this, its authorized sense : “ And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again ; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” Here the action predicted is represented as fulfilled by the raising of Christ from the dead, and no reference is made to the incarnation ; nor does the argument imply any. The sense of the passage is therefore obvious : “ Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee ; ” this day have raised thee up from the dead, in attestation of thy Sonship. And it is a passage of exactly similar import to that in the Epistle to the Romans, which has been already discussed : “ And declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.” In both, Christ is declared to be God’s Son ; the proof, in both cases, is rested upon that great event, his resurrection from the dead ; and if it has been established that St. Paul, when writing to the Romans, contemplated the supreme divinity of his Lord under the title “ Son of God,” we can be at no loss to determine how he understood it in his quotation from the second Psalm, when he gives the same proof of the claim implied in it in both cases, and when it is evident that the same current of thought was passing through his mind. There is no authority at all for considering the great object of the resurrection to be to prove the miraculous conception, as the view which Dr. Clarke has adopted necessarily supposes. If it be said, that its object was to prove, by a further consequence, that Jesus was the Messiah, the proof of the miraculous conception was but an imperfect proof of it. In this view it proved one circumstance relative to the Messiahship, mentioned in what, to a Jew, must have been but an equivocal prophecy, and but one,—that he was born of a virgin ; but it left all the other proofs of that claim untouched. I appeal, however, to every attentive reader of the New Testament, whether the resurrection of Christ is not constantly referred to by the first teachers

of Christianity, as the principal, the all-comprehending proof of Christ's mission and of his claims. In the narrow view which the theory of Dr. Clarke compels him to take of this miracle, it is not that all-comprehending proof; and it can be that kind of proof only, as it declares Christ to be the Son of God in the sense of proper divinity, for then all his other claims follow of course; the proofs of his miraculous birth, his divine mission, his kingly authority, his eternal priesthood, are all comprehended in this great proof of his divine Sonship. Christ confesses himself to be the Son of God before the Jewish council; they find him guilty of blasphemy, and obtain his crucifixion; but the disciples, immediately after the resurrection, take up the disputed title, assert it before the same people, use it in the popular and received sense, and appeal, constantly appeal, to his resurrection, as the ample, the glorious, the eternal evidence, that "he witnessed a good confession before Pilate," and before the Elders.

Of this collocation of the term "Son," with ideas of full and supreme divinity, the second Psalm, from which the text in question is taken, affords also splendid instances; a circumstance of association not to be accounted for if the principal reason of its imposition were the formation of an inferior nature. To this Son the Heathen are given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. He destroys his enemies, the associated Kings and Judges of the earth, with all their accumulated powers, as a vessel of earth is broken by a rod of iron; and they are exhorted to give him the kiss of homage, lest they "perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Similar associations of Sonship and divinity, I find in innumerable passages in the Old and New Testaments; for which I cannot account to my own mind, except as the one is constantly understood by the inspired writers to involve the other. Is God the fountain of life? "To the Son is given to have life in himself, even as the Father hath life in himself." Is the name of God solemnly recorded in the baptismal form? The second divine hypostasis has the name of Son. Is the Father to receive supreme honours? We are to honour the Son as we honour the

Father. Is the Holy Ghost sent forth? He is sent as the Spirit of the Son, and by the Son. Are all things created? They are created "by the Son, and for him." The Son is appointed "heir of all things." This Son is the brightness, (*απαυγασμα*,) the effulgence, the emitted splendour, of the Father's glory, certainly not as a human being; and the express or exact image (*χαρακτηρ*) of his person, (*της υποστασεως αυτης*,) of his substance; another expression not in the least applicable to his human body, which had no visible glory; nor to his human spirit, which, however heightened by its union with the Deity, could not be the exact image of the substance of God, for of his eternity, self-existence, omniscience, and omnipresence, it could not be even the faint image. His nature is proved by the Apostle to be super-angelic, by the very title "Son" itself: "For to which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son?" "And I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." But if that title were given him solely because of his having been conceived by the Holy Ghost, it would, as Dr. Macknight observes, instead of proving him superior to angels, fail to prove him superior to Adam. "To the Son," by way of emphasis and distinction, he saith, in most solemn and emphatic association of a divine idea with the term, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." These and many similar passages, to be found scattered through almost every page of the New Testament, I leave to your own particular examination, and ask whether, on the supposition that the term "Son of God" were understood by the Apostles in the low and narrow sense given to it by Dr. Clarke; and whether, if they felt as he feels, that the application of it to the divine nature must necessarily impugn his divinity, and lead to the conclusion, that if he were begotten, he could not be eternal, and therefore could not be God; in other words, if they felt that they were throwing a serious obstacle in the way of faith in his deity, they would have expressed themselves in such terms, and have presented the Son to us, emphatically and distinctly as the Son, invested with all the high attributes, and achieving all the works, of supreme divinity? A slight examination of another passage only, though several might be

adduced, shall close the argument from Scripture. It occurs Hebrews v. 8, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." The Apostle, in the preceding verse, speaks of the sufferings of Christ in terms which carry us to the solemn scene of the agony in the garden, "where he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears;" and then subjoins, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered." Now, not to argue that the Apostle uses the term "Son" in consequence of his having previously quoted the second Psalm, verse 7,—“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,” and cannot be supposed to assign to it a lower sense than it there bears, and which has been shown to be one which comprehends the attributes and prerogatives of divinity,—the very stress of the Apostle's argument compels us to conclude, that, in the use of this term in this passage, he must refer distinctly and exclusively to the divine nature of Christ. Was it a subject to be introduced with so great an emphasis of holy wonder, that the Son, if his human nature alone were contemplated, should become obedient unto suffering? Christ, considered as a man, was under a natural law to God; and if the will of God demanded that he should submit to death, that will was as imperative upon him, as upon the Apostles, who were called to "lay down their lives for the brethren," in attestation of the truth, and in the service of the church. Nor are the sufferings of Christ, considering him as a man, more the subject of admiration than those of his Apostles, who laid down their lives in the same cause, and with as great disinterestedness. The circumstance of the miraculous conception of Christ makes no difference; for, however produced, he was still a man, and, as a man, was still under a law to God. The force of the Apostle's remark, then, consists in this, that he, being more than a man, a divine Person, and therefore under no natural law or obligation to do or to suffer, became voluntarily obedient, put himself under law, came to do the will of his God and Father, who had assigned him the work of suffering and death: "A body hast thou prepared me," a body in which to suffer and to die; "lo, I come to do thy will, O God; thy

law is within my heart." This is the only consideration which gives us a perfect view of the love of Christ. "Though he were a Son," a divine Person, and under no obligations, yet even he, identified with a suffering nature, "learned obedience by the things he suffered." This is the only contrast which can convey any impression of supererogatory charity; the contrast between natural insubordinate dignity, and conventional and covenant obedience; between the right of exemption from suffering, and the benevolence of voluntary submission to it; between what Christ was as Son of God, and what he chose to endure as the Son of God made man. Take the passage in the sense of Dr. Clarke: "Though he were in his human nature produced by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of his virgin mother, 'yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered;'" and contrast this exposition, poor, spiritless, without point or emphasis, with another passage in the writings of St. Paul, and you will not hesitate which view of it to prefer: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The passages are exactly parallel; the phraseology not greatly different; and the sense precisely the same. "Though he were a Son,"—"in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God;"—"yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered,"—"he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The Son, in the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is he who, in the Epistle to the Philippians, is said to be "in the form of God," and, without robbery, "equal with God." In other words, "the Son" stands there as a designation, to be taken in the exclusive sense of positive divinity.\*

Though it would not in the least alter the argument from Scripture, in favour of the divine Sonship, to adduce passages in which a human sonship is expressed, because both may be

\* Consult also Hebrews vii. 28, where the antithesis is equally strong, and the passage utterly inexplicable on Dr. Clarke's principle.



true; yet I observed, in the former part of this discussion, that I was not prepared to allow, that even Christ is called the Son of God in Luke i. 35, with sole reference to the human nature, or its miraculous conception. There is certainly there no contemplation of the human nature of Christ, in contradistinction to the divine; but as it was in connexion with it from the moment of its creation. This union of the two natures, from the instant of the creation of the inferior nature, seems to have constituted the holiness, the peculiar and emphatic sanctity, of the "holy thing" who was to be born of the virgin. The only question is, whether the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, producing a supernatural conception, was the reason why the "holy Person" to be born was to be called the Son of God, considered simply as the means of bringing into the world a faultless man, or considered as the means, and the essential process, of the incarnation of God in a human body. If the latter be the reason; if the operation of the Holy Ghost, creating a human body, in order to effect an incarnation of Deity, was that which led the angel to say, "Therefore, also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God;" there is in the whole passage so direct a contemplation of divinity, as well as humanity, and of both as united in one "holy thing" or Person, that the passage is by no means so positive a testimony that Christ is called the Son of God with mere reference to the conception of his human nature, as Dr. Clarke supposes. There is nothing in this text to show that the term "Son of God" is given with exclusive reference to the human nature. The "holy thing" born of Mary was, as the angel predicted, called the "Son of God;" but we have seen he was so called when his miraculous conception is not in the least referred to, and when it was not even known. I have examined with some care, I think, all the passages in the New Testament where the term "Son of God" occurs, as applied to Christ; and I find no one in which it is used as the designation of the human nature exclusively, and when the divine nature of Christ is not also implied; no one in which the humanity is considered in contradistinction to the higher nature; except it may be the solitary text Mark xiii. 32, the

difficulty of which Dr. Clarke confesses, and the genuineness of the clause "neither the Son," he appears disposed to give up. He therefore will not bring that into the argument. On the contrary, there are passages, too numerous to be quoted, where that term is so used, that the mind is at once carried to the immediate contemplation of the acts and attributes of pure and essential Godhead, and utterly loses sight of every thing human.

Such is the evidence of Scripture on this doctrine: Not, indeed, the whole which might be adduced; but it is, I think, sufficient to convince any person who is willing to settle his opinions upon the plain unfrustrated sense of the sacred word alone, that in how many cases soever it may be pretended the term "Son of God" is used by the inspired writers, they used it also when applied to Christ in a sense which marks him out as the Son of God, as to his higher and divine nature; and if that has been proved, the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ is established by the authority of inspiration itself. Against this we have Dr. Clarke's principle, that it cannot be true, and is not the sense of Scripture, because it is contrary to reason. If Christ be the Son of God, as to his superhuman nature, he cannot be eternal, and therefore not divine; if, on the contrary, he is God, he cannot be the Son of God, except as to his human nature. Now, if I thought more of this argument than I really do; if to my mind, as to Dr. Clarke's, the eternal Sonship of a divine Person involved a contradiction to my reason, I dare not plead that circumstance against what appears to me so plainly the sense of Scripture. How do I know that my reason in this particular is right reason? that the communication of one single idea, which I may acquire in this life, when my knowledge is more improved, and my faculties better exercised, or which I may not acquire till I enter the life to come, may not correct my present views, alter the whole scope of my present reasoning on these high subjects, and furnish me with some medium of proof, which shall demonstrate what now is to me, not only incomprehensible, but even contradictory? If the question were concerning what I could see, handle, weigh

and measure ; if it related to a being, with whose mode of existence, and whose essential and accidental attributes, I were fully acquainted in all those particulars of which any thing is affirmed, the case would be considerably altered : But it concerns a Being confessedly the greatest, because the first and the last, the Author and End of all things ; whose nature is by necessity infinite ; of whose perfections ages of contemplation in the nearest and most delightful vision of him will leave an infinite of mystery to be unfolded ; and who must, to finite minds, however exalted by station, or matured by duration, because finite, be still, in respect to their comprehension, **THE UNKNOWN.** Is it possible, then, that, as to his nature and modes of being, I can have views so certain, so just, so agreeable to “ eternal reason,” that I shall be authorized in affirming, that the reason of the case to me is, indeed, the reason of the case itself ? Where is the man who has not, in many instances, changed his opinions, as to things infinitely lower, and within the reach of man ? Yet his former opinions appeared to him to possess satisfactory evidence of truth ; and the same reason which now impugns and rejects them, formerly regarded them as undeniable conclusions. Better information, or more patient inquiry, has put him in possession of new or corrected premises ; and he reasons better, though he reasons differently, perhaps oppositely. A very laudable kind of self-scepticism grows up often with our years, and corrects the confidence of youth. What is this but a proof of the fallibility of our reason, because it is a proof of the limitedness and incorrectness of our knowledge ? We can argue only from what we know ; and if we err in knowledge, we must err in reason. Is our reason, then, the standard by which to try the word of God ? I certainly do not mean, that we ought not to make use of our reason, that is, our understanding and judgment, in interpreting the sense of the divine volume ;—that would be ridiculous ; it is what no one says ;—but is there not a manifest difference between inquiring for the sense of Scripture, by considering the established meaning of its terms, the connexion of a proposition with the argument of which it is a part, and the elucidation which doubtful

passages may receive from other more obvious parts of the sacred record ; and approaching to this word with previous notions assumed to be infallible, to whatever subject applied, because to us they are reasonable, and to the standard of which we summon the declarations of Scripture, by that to fix their meaning without appeal ? What is said by the God of truth must be true ; what appears reasonable to me may or may not be true ; and the position which best becomes our humility, as fallible creatures, is, not that Scripture cannot be true if it be contrary to my reason, but that my reason cannot be true if it contradict Scripture. This must be held conclusive, at least, by all who believe in the divine authority of the Bible. The only question among such ought surely to be, not what ought to be the sense of Scripture, but what that sense really is ; not what we must make it, to make it reasonable, but what it appears to be when read solely by its own light ; and if Dr. Clarke had made the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Christ exclusively the subject of scriptural inquiry, he would not have offended against the only principle which can preserve man in his proper place, an humble learner at the feet of the great teacher Christ ; “ for if any man receive not the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein,” he will not receive its truths.

But as Dr. Clarke has, in the conclusion of his Commentary, contended for a right to make use of human reason in matters of revelation, which to me appears highly dangerous and unwarranted, I shall give his remarks on the subject a larger consideration. The passages to which I refer are the following ; and I quote them, that it may appear that I attribute to him nothing more than he has himself expressed as his deliberate views, in the summing up of his opinions at the end of his learned and, generally speaking, very useful Commentary on the New Testament. “ The doctrine which cannot stand the test of rational investigation cannot be true. We have gone too far when we have said, Such and such doctrines should not be subjected to rational investigation, being doctrines of pure revelation. I know of no such doctrine in the Bible. The doctrines of this book are doctrines

of eternal reason ; and they are revealed because they are such. Human reason could not have found them out ; but, when revealed, reason can both apprehend and comprehend them.” “No man either can or should believe a doctrine that contradicts reason ; but he may safely credit (in any thing that concerns the nature of God) what is above his reason.” Here are, as you cannot fail to perceive, some very singular positions, and some very obvious contradictions.

To most of these positions I object, generally, because they implicate the pernicious principle, that the meaning of Scripture is to be determined by our own views of what is reasonable ; that human reason is to be made, not only the instrument of investigating the meaning of the revelation, but the judge of the doctrine ; a principle which makes it a canon of interpretation, that where the letter of Scripture indicates a doctrine which appears unreasonable to us, it must be taken in a sense which does appear reasonable. This, I conceive, would authorize the most unnatural interpretations of even Socinian writers ; and make the sense of revelation to be what every man may take it to be ; thereby destroying the unity of truth, and leaving us without any standard of opinion, except the ever-varying one of human reason.\* The application of such a canon of interpretation is objectionable in almost every case ; but more especially in all those parts of the sacred revelation which relate to the manner of the divine existence. This must, from its nature, be a subject of pure revelation ; “for no man hath seen God at any time ;” and though there is in many cases a great difference between what transcends, and what contradicts, the reason of man, it is not possible to

\* “If we come to examine the rules by which mankind give their assent to many propositions, differing from and contradictory to each other, we cannot think this procedure of the mind to be a very easy or sure performance. The bounds of truth and falsehood have never yet been settled ; one is assured of what another is diffident ; evidence in Egypt is but probability at Athens ; and, by all experience and history, we find there has been so little exactness or certainty in the conclusions of mankind, that they seem to be the result of inattention, passion, or interest, rather than proceeding on any sound principles, or in any rational method of argumentation for the discovery of truth.” —ELLIS'S *Knowledge of Divine Things*.

say, in speculations concerning the Deity, either that the reason which may be contradicted is right, or always when reason is contradicted or when only transcended ; for, to one person there may be an evident contradiction, while to another only a transcendency. Even Dr. Priestley has observed, "There is manifold reason to conclude, that the divine nature, or essence, besides being simply unknown to us, has properties most essentially different from any thing else. God is, and must ever remain, the incomprehensible : " A just position, which, had it been kept in mind by Socinians in their inquiries, would have prevented them from so positively concluding, that there cannot be three co-eternal and co-equal personal subsistencies in the unity of one divine essence ; and would equally have prevented all who have denied the eternal Sonship of our Lord from concluding as positively, that one of those subsistencies cannot bear the name and relation of an eternal Son without a contradiction. In both cases, it were surely the highest reason humbly to receive what God hath testified of himself, without attempting to coerce its meaning by the rule and rod of our assumed first and infallible principles. It is true, Dr. Clarke denies, in his note on Luke i. 35, the eternal Sonship of Christ to be the doctrine of revelation ; but goes immediately to prove that it is not so, by alleging its absurdity, its contradiction to all just notions of the deity of Christ. If he meant to rest the proof on Scripture, why did he resort to the *argumentum ex absurdo* ? If he did not mean to make our reason the judge of the case, why did he not merely adduce passages of holy writ, used in support of the commonly received opinion, and show that the doctrine is not contained in them ? His practice, in this instance, shows that I have not mistaken his views in the application of reason to matters of revelation.

Let us, however, attend to Dr. Clarke's argument on this subject. The doctrines of Scripture are doctrines of "eternal reason." This is his position ; and his inference is, that they are therefore proper subjects of rational investigation ; and that human reason is an adequate judge of them, when once revealed. With him we acknowledge that the doctrines

of Scripture are doctrines of eternal reason. Eternal reason is truth ; and the word of God must in all its parts be true ; but it is remarkable that Dr. Clarke did not detect himself in a fallacy which vitiates his whole argument. With him human reason and eternal reason are assumed to be the same ; in other words, that human reason is divine reason, and therefore infallible. Now, it may be the reverse of eternal reason ; or it may be a very faint radiation of eternal reason ;\* but in no case can it be full and perfect eternal reason ; for then would the reason of man be equalled to the reason of God. These principles are of easy application. A revelation from God cannot contain all the truths apprehended by eternal reason. This would be profusion, a hopeless attempt at instruction ; for the mind of man can only receive a very small part of the truths known to the divine mind, or, what is the same thing, of the truths established on the eternal reason of things. All beyond what can be made known in any mode to the mind is not capable of revelation ; all that is revealed as truth, but of which the reasons, the processes of proof, are not given, is apprehended, but not comprehended, by the mind ; and is no revelation to reason, as such, but rather to faith ; the human faculty of comparing and determining not being furnished with so clear a view of the nature and relations of the subjects in question, as to conclude or judge any thing concerning them by the light of their own evidence. Certainly, then, it is possible that there may be truths, the evidence of which can only be known to the eternal reason of the divine nature ; and which cannot possibly be the subjects of the reasoning of any inferior mind, and therefore not of human reasoning. I will go farther, and say, that there must

\* “ The ratiocinations of men are vastly imperfect. Do we not every day see wise men falling into dangerous errors and mistakes ; and, when their arguments come to be examined, are found to proceed on loose and uncertain principles, to use fallacious incoherent ideas, or draw weak and false conclusions ? If this be not so, whence comes so much controversy, opposition, and litigation, among the learned of the world, in all parts of knowledge ? So that care must be taken not to admit every thing for reasoning that pretends to be so ; but rather to suspect what is subject to so much abuse, especially when we find it striving against God.”—ELLIS.

of necessity be such truths in a revelation, if it be a revelation of God, his mode of existence, and his counsels, which, from their nature, can only be fully known to God himself. The only question which arises out of these premises is, whether the conclusions of eternal reason may not be subjects of revelation, whilst the process of their proof remains unknown ; either because it transcends our faculties, or that it is purposely hidden, in cases where it might be understood, because it is necessary to put us under a state of discipline, and teach us implicit submission to the *dicta* of the unerring God.

This, surely, is conceivable ; for what is similar occurs among men themselves. The conclusions of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy have been understood and admitted by thousands whose minds were utterly incapable of pursuing the processes of calculation and reasoning by which they were reached, and who have never, in fact, become acquainted with them. They have been received upon the authority of a superior mind ; and if he were right, his followers are right, though their reason, properly speaking, has had no share in illuminating them. In like manner, there are truths in the revelation of God, the evidence of which is withheld ; but they are received under his authority ; and as the eternal reason of God is absolutely perfect, the doctrines we thus receive are true, though neither in this nor in another world should we be able, for want of evidence, to make them subjects of rational investigation, and ourselves work out the proof. Dr. Clarke cannot mean to assert, that all the truths comprehended by eternal reason, with their evidence, and all the processes of the operation of the divine mind upon such truths, are contained in the Bible, lie level to our reason, and are within its reach ; in other words, that eternal reason and human reason are the same ; for then it would follow, that we have no more to learn,—that “we are as gods, knowing good and evil.” If, then, we must acknowledge that there are truths in the divine revelation, which are but the conclusions and results of eternal reason, while the rational evidence of them is inscrutable to us ; then are there truths which cannot be made the subjects of human rational investigation in any mode ; truths which



are to be admitted upon authority ; something to be received on the evidence, that it is a part of a revelation from God, and not on its own evidence ; something, in a word, to be believed, as well as something to be admitted, because it is agreeable to reason.

Dr. Clarke, however, says, that if a doctrine will not bear the test of rational investigation, it cannot be true ; but there is a previous inquiry, whether we can subject every doctrine to such a test : Nor is it an inquiry to be hastily despatched ; for the most serious consequences are involved in it.

All the doctrines which churches of every age, and of every description, have crowded into their creeds, or sung in their hymns, are to be put in question ; the whole is to be brought, not, as one might have expected to hear from such a Divine as is Dr. Clarke, to the test of Scripture alone, but reason also, the great “commentator” on Scripture itself ; or, in his former words, subjected to the “test of rational investigation ;” and if any doctrine, whether found in creeds or sung in hymns, will not bear this test, it must be instantly and fearlessly rejected : *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*. Of what kind, then, is the test of rational investigation, by which the doctrines of the universal church are to be determined ? I can attach no other meaning to the phrase, than that it is a process by which we inquire the truth and falsehood of any thing by comparing it with what we already know, and what we have already determined to be true. We are led by reason, as Cicero has observed, “from things apprehended and understood, to things not apprehended.” Now, to the reason and fitness of how many of the doctrines of revelation shall we be conducted by this process ? To how many of the truths concerning the divine nature which the sacred record has exhibited to us can any previous knowledge we have be thus applied ? For previous knowledge it must be, or the investigation is not rational. If it be conducted on principles which we have received on the authority of Scripture, then it is scriptural investigation ; we cease then to walk by our own torch, and walk in the light of the Lord. All the doctrines in human creeds are to be put in question ; and, as the

Scriptures are by this principle excluded,—or this boasted process of “rational investigation” means nothing,—formularies which, whatever mistakes or additions they may be charged with, do contain all the great doctrines of revelation, are to be tried by principles previously obtained by the exercise of our reason, or, in other words, subjected to rational investigation. Now, I will not say how much of our previous knowledge may be used as sure data in the conducting of this inquiry; whether there is not much in the Bible relative to morals, and duties merely human, of the excellency of which we might not obtain some very satisfactory demonstration in this way; though I think these subjects are but very few, and that the very data themselves are furnished by some previous traditional declaration of the will of God; but as to subjects which relate to the divine nature, I cannot conceive of any information existing among men previously to a revelation, or previously to its being admitted, which can furnish a rule of judgment at all certain, much less infallible. For this inquiry to be strictly and severely rational, all the knowledge of God which has been obtained by tradition or previous revelation must be put out of the case, and the whole of what is affirmed of God must be tested solely by some previous known and established truths. But where, then, is the inquirer to begin? To what will he liken God, or to whom compare him? What is the task we thus assign him? To apply finite measures to an infinite Being, corporeal ideas to a spiritual essence, or mixed notions of corporeity and spirituality to a Being pure and unmixed; a knowledge arising from acquaintance with perishable objects to absolute immortality; and the calculations of time to positive eternity. If an Apostle, with all the aids of a plenary inspiration, could not approach that abyss without exclaiming, “O the depth!” if, deeply as the radiance of divine light had penetrated it, the profound darkness below was still sufficient to awe his spirit, and repress the fearful gaze in which he for a moment indulged; I can scarcely think the plummet, the rod, and the measure, which unassisted reason furnishes, an apparatus sufficient to mete out this immeasurable ocean: And it is not, indeed, further necessary

to prove, how utterly false and delusive all rational investigation must be, as to the divine nature, when an authority to which Dr. Clarke, with every other Christian, must bow, has declared, that as “no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man that is in him,” so “no man knows the things of God but the Spirit of God.” If, without a revelation by words or signs, no man can penetrate the secrets of even a human mind, to him who would approach the depths of God by his own intelligence, we may justly say, “Canst thou by searching find out God?”

Though I have here taken Dr. Clarke’s principle of subjecting divine doctrines to rational investigation, according to the strict meaning of that phrase in our common language, yet I shall probably be met by another of his observations, in which the principle before stated has the air of being modified. Though reason, he admits, could not have discovered the doctrines of revelation, yet, when they are revealed, reason is able not only “to apprehend but to comprehend them.” Postponing any consideration of the comprehending power here ascribed to reason,—and which, indeed, is given up in the same page,—I may ask what the principle of subjecting doctrines of revelation to “rational investigation” gains by this apparent modification, if, indeed, it were intended as one? So little, that the sentiments are fatal to each other. For if reason is to proceed only by the light of revelation, then any investigation so conducted is not, as I have already observed, a rational, but a scriptural, investigation; and Dr. Clarke has in vain attempted to correct the notions of those who exclude reason as the judge of the doctrines of an acknowledged revelation. If the investigation is to be conducted by an appeal to principles which reason did not furnish, but which have been communicated to the mind by revelation, Dr. Clarke agrees with his opponents while he strongly condemns them; for then are the obvious data of that revelation made the test of those parts of it which are more recondite, and human reason is no judge in the case at all. So contradictory is Dr. Clarke to himself!

But there is still another view of this modification. Dr.

Clarke may be understood to mean, that reason, when aided by a revelation, is raised into so perfect a condition, that what appears incongruous to it must of necessity be concluded to be contrary to the revelation itself. This, however, proceeds either upon that very false assumption, which I have already pointed out, that a revelation from God to man must not only declare a doctrine, but also discover its congruity with the reason and truth of things ; or that reason, when put in possession of the doctrine, is able to complete the process, and to mount up to the discovery of its full evidence. To this notion, however, the evidence of Scripture is in direct opposition : “ No man knoweth the Son, but the Father ;” but a revelation has been made by the Father of the Son ; and yet the reason of those who have received that revelation, so far from completing the discovery to the full evolution of the evidence from the truth and nature of things of all that is affirmed in the revelation of the Son, is still so uninstructed, that to this hour it holds good, that “ no man knoweth the Son but the Father.” \* Again : If it be true, that as to many high mysteries we “ see as through a glass darkly,” and not “ face to face,” with clear and distinct knowledge ; something which we now know obscurely shall be hereafter made plain ; and this clear discovery is not of the mere subject itself, which is seen, though obscurely, but of its modes and relations, and consequently its absolute correspondence with the truth of things ; in other words, the discovery will be that of its rational evidence. If reason had the faculty of improving upon the truth of God, making clear what is doubtful, and rendering luminous what is obscure, the veil which was thrown upon the mysteries of Christianity, at its first revelation, would since have been gradually withdrawn, in consequence of the investigations of learned and pious men ; and we had now been, as to the “ deep things of God,” much nearer a demonstration than formerly. This, however, is not agreeable to fact. I know of no one doctrine which was formerly allowed to transcend human reason, of which we have received any

\* “ The full comprehension of the Godhead, and the mystery of the Trinity, belongs to God alone.”— DR. CLARKE, *in loco*.

stronger demonstration in consequence of the application of the most profound reasonings. Divines who have confined themselves to demonstrate doctrines by bringing the collective evidence of the divine word to bear upon them, are those to whom our faith is most indebted ; and we ought to acknowledge our obligations, and those of the Christian world, to those theologians also, who have met the objections to Christianity, urged by infidels and others, with so much triumph. But I appeal to every person who has made theology his study, whether the great service such Divines have rendered to truth, may not be chiefly comprehended under the following heads :— Presenting the question at issue in its true form, and thus detecting the sophistry of objectors ; proving their arguments false, on principles held by themselves, and acknowledged by mankind ; demonstrating, that, in a choice of difficulties, the greater number, and those of the most formidable kind, lie against themselves ; exhibiting the evidences of the revelation, which on all sides are acknowledged to be proper subjects of rational investigation ; and in showing in how perfect a manner Christianity meets the wants and miseries of the human race. On the high and solemn mysteries of our religion, the rational evidence of which has been withheld in the revelation, what light has been shed by the most powerful ratiocinations ? Do they, like philosophical truths, gain ground by reasonings abstract or analogic ? What evidence, for instance, has in this way been brought to the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity ? And does it not to this moment remain a doctrine of pure revelation, standing, I allow, upon the authority of the rational proof, that the record which contains it is authentic, but upon no rational evidence of the doctrine itself ? No man of whom I have heard was ever convinced of this, or any of the acknowledged mysteries of Christianity, by an appeal to his reason, even when put under the tuition of the most highly-cultivated and powerful reason of others ; whilst thousands have been brought to believe them upon that which is indeed their proper and exclusive demonstration, the testimony of God ; well judging, with a learned Divine, “ that no foundation is so immovable as the word of God ; no demonstration so clear as

divine authority ; no truth so evident as what God affirms ; nor is it natural reason, or philosophical notions, but faith, which will make us acceptable to him."

But this notion of the ability of human reason to acquire the rational evidence of doctrines which are but nakedly and authoritatively stated in the divine record, (and this is all I can understand by the qualification which Dr. Clarke supposes reason to derive from Scripture to be a judge of divine things,) proceeds in utter disregard of the difference between the office and potentiality of reason in divine and in human things. This is well stated by a writer I have before quoted.\* "The great difference between the objects of human knowledge and divine is, that in the former there is a spacious field for new acquisitions and improvements ; but in divine, invisible objects it is far otherwise. The boundary is fixed ; our inquiries limited to what is revealed ; and all further search vain and unlawful. These things are above the discovery of reason ; it had no principles from which it could regularly deduce them, by any natural use of its faculties ; and, without supernatural instruction, could never have attained the least knowledge or probability concerning them. It was not possible for any idea, notice, or apprehension of them to enter the mind, but by the mediation of some external agency ; so that all we do or can hope to know of them in this world, is from revelation." The substance of which just remarks is, that where revelation stops we must stop ; and that where there is a revelation of a subject, but none, or an imperfect one, of its modes and relations, though the reason of man is in this way enlightened with a new fact, that circumstance does not in the least empower it to discover, what revelation is still silent upon, its accordance with eternal reason ; and what is affirmed of it cannot therefore be the subject of rational investigation.

The allusion made above to faith leads me also to observe that, on Dr. Clarke's principles, it is scarcely conceivable how faith can exist in the mind of any man who has the revelation of God in his hand, in the full Christian sense of that term.

\* Ellis's Knowledge of Divine Things.

We can scarcely be said to believe the existence of sensible objects ; we know them : Nor in a mathematical demonstration ; which is also the object of certain knowledge. Believing has been defined by a great master\* “to be the admitting or receiving any proposition to be true, upon arguments or proofs that persuade us to receive it as true, without certain knowledge, that is, knowledge derived from the thing itself, that it is so.” It is true that the moral evidence of the truth of testimony is a proper subject of rational investigation ; and, therefore, the foundation of faith. As in the revelation of the Bible, which purports to be from God, “God has made us competent judges,” observes a Prelate of the English Church, “inasmuch as natural reason informs us what are the proper evidences of a divine revelation. When, upon an impartial examination, we find the evidences to be full and sufficient, our reason pronounces that the revelation ought to be received ; and, as a necessary consequence thereof, directs us to give up ourselves to the guidance of it ; but here reason stops, not thinking itself at liberty to call in question the wisdom and experience of any part, after it is satisfied that the whole comes from God.” But there is a faith of a higher nature, that faith which the Apostle Paul calls “the evidence of things not seen ;” by which must be meant also, that, so far from having the evidence of our reason for these unseen things, we have no other evidence than faith in the divine testimony concerning them. This may be further illustrated by our Lord’s words to Thomas : “Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” From this it follows, that there may be faith on a lower evidence than was vouchsafed to the incredulous disciple for his conviction ; and it as clearly follows, that this evidence may be reduced still lower on many subjects, and that without any injury to faith, till the only evidence left is the bare testimony of God, the fact that God hath spoken. This is faith in its highest sense ; and it is evident that it rests not in the least on the rational investiga-

\* Locke.

tion of the doctrine itself, for no rational evidence is afforded concerning it. What then becomes of Dr. Clarke's principle, that "the doctrine which cannot stand the test of rational investigation cannot be true?" There are doctrines to which this process cannot be applied, because no rational evidence of them is given. This is not less true after the revelation of them is made than before; for they are authoritatively, not rationally, stated there. They are objects of faith, not of inquiry, and therefore not of reason; and he who, led by the authority of Dr. Clarke, subjects them to this test, will very probably either soon give up the principle or the doctrine. On the dark ocean of these mysteries he will either wreck his bark, or must put the helm into a superior hand. On this subject the following remarks of Mr. Locke, in his reply to the Bishop of Worcester, an authority of great weight with the advocates of reason, are worthy attention. On the question which gave rise to the controversy I say nothing.

"Your accusation of my lessening the credibility of these articles of faith, as founded on this, that the article of the immateriality of the soul abates of its credibility, if it be allowed that its immateriality, which is the supposed proof from reason and philosophy of its immortality, cannot be demonstrated from natural reason; which argument of your Lordship bottoms, as I humbly conceive, on this, that divine revelation abates of its credibility in all those articles it proposes, proportionably as human reason fails to support the testimony of God. And all that your Lordship, in those passages, has said, when examined, will, I suppose, be found to import thus much, namely, 'Does God propose any thing to mankind to be believed? It is very fit and credible to be believed, if reason can demonstrate it to be true; but if human reason comes short in the case, and cannot make it out, its credibility is thereby lessened:' Which is in effect to say, that the veracity of God is not a sure and firm foundation of faith to rely upon, without the concurrent testimony of reason; that is, with reverence be it spoken, God is not to be believed on his own word, unless what he reveals be in itself



credible, and might be believed without him. Your Lordship says, you do not question whether God can give immortality to a material substance ; but you say it takes off very much from the evidence of immortality, if it depends wholly upon God's giving that which of its own nature it is not capable of. To which I reply, any one's not being able to demonstrate the soul to be immaterial, takes off not very much, nor at all, from the evidence of its immortality, if God has revealed that it shall be immortal, because the veracity of God is a demonstration of the truth of what he has revealed, and the want of another demonstration of a proposition that is demonstratively true takes not off from the evidence of it. For where there is a clear demonstration, there is as much evidence as any truth can have that is not self-evident. Can any one who admits of divine revelation think this proposition less credible, 'The bodies of men after the resurrection shall live for ever,' than this, 'The souls of men shall, after the resurrection, live for ever?' For that he must do, if he think either of them is less credible than the other. If this be so, reason is to be consulted how far God is to be believed, and the credit of the divine testimony must receive its force from the evidence of reason ; which is evidently to take away the credibility of divine revelation in all supernatural truths wherein the evidence of reason fails."

Yet though these are principles which I suppose Dr. Clarke must acknowledge, where other doctrines which he believes are in question ;—for what rational evidence, except that they are doctrines of a revelation from God, is there of the Trinity, or of the union of two natures in one person in our Lord ; both of which he will admit to be agreeable to eternal reason ? —he, nevertheless, lays it down, as a general principle too, that when a revelation is made, the reason of man is not only able "to apprehend but to comprehend" its doctrines. This principle, as far as I recollect, was never stated so broadly in any Socinian writer, not even by Dr. Priestley or Mr. Belsham ; though it has been very broadly acted upon both by them and by their followers. Henceforward, then, we are no more to speak of the incomprehensible God ; or the great

mystery of godliness ; or of any other mystery. We have reached the old Socinian dilemma, " What is revealed is not a mystery ; what is a mystery is not revealed ; and there are, therefore, no mysteries or no revelation."\* It is not worth while, however, to spend a word in refutation of a principle which must carry every one who seriously admits it into the total disbelief of one half of the Bible, because Dr. Clarke, in the same page, has, with very happy disregard of consistency, himself given it up. In the divine nature he admits there is something " above reason ;" then it follows that reason cannot comprehend it, even when illuminated by revelation ; for what is above and beyond our reason cannot be comprehended by it ; and this is acknowledged : " I cannot comprehend the divine nature, therefore I adore it ; if I could comprehend, I could not adore." That passages so contradictory should appear on the same page, shows either great confusion in the views of Dr. Clarke on the proper office of human reason, or great unguardedness in replying to those opponents he had in view when he wrote the observations with which his Commentary concludes. It can scarcely be supposed that one of these conflicting paragraphs was intended as a modification of the other ; for what obviously contradicts, cannot modify ; and the Doctor's readers will, therefore, be left to choose for themselves between the two. How many will choose the worst, I fear we are able from our knowledge of human nature to conclude with too much certainty not to be deeply grieved that a momentary countenance should be given by Dr. Clarke to principles so dangerous in their operation, so utterly destructive to faith in all that is peculiar and special in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This countenance has been given unguardedly, I doubt not ; but it has been given.

Leaving, then, the proposition, that when the doctrines of eternal reason are revealed, human reason is able both to apprehend and comprehend them, in hope that the wound inflicted upon it by the author himself may appear, to some

\* See an excellent chapter on mysteries in Dr. O. Gregory's *Letters on the Evidences of Revelation*.

of his readers at least, a fatal one, I proceed to give some consideration to another, which is not peculiar to Dr. Clarke ; but, stated loosely and generally, is not less dangerous. “ No man,” we are told, “ either can, or should, believe a doctrine which contradicts reason ;” and it is of course supposed that there is no doctrine in the Bible which does in fact contradict reason.

If Dr. Clarke means that there is nothing in revelation, even as it respects the nature of God, which contradicts eternal reason or truth, then this is a mere truism ; but if he means, as I suppose, that there are no attributes or modes of existence ascribed to the divine nature in his word, which contradict human reason, then I greatly fear that he will be understood, (for it is indeed a natural, and in my view a necessary, inference,) that whatever doctrine of Scripture contradicts the reason of him who reads it, is not true, and must be rejected. This is variously applied by different men. The Theist holds the same principle ; and finding in the Bible doctrines which contradict his reason, he rejects the volume altogether. The old Socinians espoused the principle ; and, finding doctrines in the plain and fair construction of Scripture contradictory to their reason, adopted fanciful and gratuitous methods of interpretation, by which to resolve the sense of Scripture into some agreement with their own tenets, which of course they concluded to be according to eternal reason, because they were dictated by their own reason. They preferred to adopt a mode of interpreting Scripture which took away all certainty from its meaning, and all meaning from its words, to the giving up the principle assumed by Dr. Clarke, that there can be nothing in a revelation from God concerning himself which contradicts the reason of man. The modern Socinians, ashamed of the absurdities of the allegorizing comments of their elder brethren, which were used to get rid of the plain sense of inspiration, have preferred a partial imitation of the example of the Theists. When a passage in the New Testament stubbornly contradicts their reason, which they are sufficiently ready to assume is eternal reason, they expel the chapter or verse from the sacred record ; and often, on very insufficient evidence of its want of genuine-

ness. They are not, however, wholly independent of the forced and figurative methods of the old Socinians ; for sufficient remains in their authenticated text contradictory to their reason to render this process necessary. They are still obliged, not only to excisions, but to figures and allegories ; and in the true Procrustean method, what is too short they stretch, what is too long they lop away.

The error of Dr. Clarke before mentioned—the assumption that human reason is eternal reason, thus placing a fallible for an infallible standard—has also crept into this proposition. Nor does it at all relieve the case to say, that in the argument he supposes human reason to be enlightened by divine revelation. Many who reject doctrines, which Dr. Clarke considers essential to the Christian system, profess, as well as himself, on these very subjects to have read and studied the sacred record, with equal diligence, and equal means of coming to the knowledge of its truth ; and who is to deny it ? Yet to their reason, so enlightened, doctrines which to Dr. Clarke's reason involve no contradiction, present to their reason gross contradictions. The same remark we may make as to the article in question, the eternal Sonship of Christ. Dr. Clarke will not surely pretend that he has brought more learning, more honesty, more pious desire to know the mind of God in his word, great as are his faculties in all these respects, than many of those eminent Divines who have investigated this doctrine, and given to the world the results of their inquiries ; and yet,—O the fallacy of the standard of this boasted reason, even when enlightened ! —Dr. Clarke is confident that the notion of the eternal Sonship contradicts the Deity of Christ ; whilst to the reason of such Divines, however the doctrine might transcend their capacity, it never presented any such contradiction.

In pursuance of the argument, it may also be a subject of inquiry, whether, though Dr. Clarke supposes the reason which is to judge to be enlightened by the revelation, in point of fact reason is in all cases so enlightened as to be qualified for such an arbitration.

Now, as to many doctrines, and doctrines too which Dr. Clarke admits, this is not the case. I have before stated that

a revelation may contain the conclusions of eternal reason, whilst the *media* of proof are utterly hidden. That it may contain facts respecting the nature of God, without any other evidence of their truth than the authority of the Revealer ; facts respecting his administration of the affairs of the world, the reasons of which lie in the depths of his own bosom, "matters of which he gives no account." Now, in none of these cases does the revelation enlighten reason, farther than by the naked statement of the doctrine, and the simple annunciation of the fact. It is the highest reason to believe them ; but they are believed on authority, not on their own evidence, and the authority of their reasonableness. It is stated, for instance, "that the Judge of all the earth will do right ;" and our reason is enlightened by this important axiom of the divine government ; but surely we are not enlightened to discover the rectitude of every act of God in the administration of the world ; and what then should we say of the man, who, taking up the principle, that to reason, enlightened by Scripture, there can be nothing contrary in its doctrines, should deny the divine commission of Moses, because he commanded the Israelites to slay the children of the Canaanites with their parents ; inasmuch as it is contrary to his notions of rectitude to punish the innocent with the guilty ? Dr. Clarke, with most Divines I suppose, would say that we are not adequate judges in this affair, because the bearing, relations, and results of the divine government have not yet been fully unfolded ; which, in other words, is only to admit that our reason is not fully enlightened by revelation, even in all those matters on which that revelation treats ; that there are subjects which are not to be tested by our views of what is reasonable ; and that, as in this case, where all our notions of justice are violated, human reason may be even contradicted by revelation, and yet, that the doctrine which thus contradicts our reason may be nevertheless a doctrine of revelation, and agreeable to eternal reason. I have no hesitation in saying, that the doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, of the union of two natures in one personal Christ, of the resurrection of the same body, not only transcend, but contradict, human

reason, though all are admitted by Dr. Clarke. For what is the meaning of this formidable phrase, brandished with so much defiance by the enemies of revelation, and under which so many Christian Divines have cowered, and to escape whose apprehended edge they have too often come to disgraceful and compromising terms with the enemy? The only meaning it can have is contrariety to our previous knowledge, to those inferences with which we have been furnished by the use of our rational faculties, and which we conclude to be true. This, however, involves the following uncertainties in a great number of cases: Whether our conclusions are in fact true; whether they are universally true; whether they are at all applicable to the case; or in how many respects they are applicable. But if this previous knowledge of ours be assumed as true, I question not but it will meet with frequent and full contradiction in the sacred record; for that is contradictory to our reason, which, when proposed to us, we pronounce false and impossible. Let, then, the doctrines of the Trinity, the compound nature of Christ, and the resurrection of the same body, be formed into abstract propositions, and proposed to us, not under authority, and as doctrines of revelation; let it be asked, Can three Persons exist in one undivided essence, and one Person in two natures of a different essence? and the reason of probably every human mind, not excepting the reason of Dr. Clarke, would meet them with an instant negation. But what does revealed truth suffer from this? Plainly, nothing more than true philosophy suffers from it. Let the Copernican doctrine of the mobility of the earth, and the fixedness of the sun, be also thrown into abstract propositions. Let a man unacquainted with philosophy be asked, whether a body which he daily sees ascend from one side of the earth, make a circuit in the air, and sink down on the other side, remains stationary the whole time; and it contradicts his reason, and he instantly denies it. Let him again be asked, whether there can be so great a contradiction between his reason and his senses, that his reason will ever affirm to the conviction of his mind, what the experience of his sight has daily for many years determined him to deny; and he would not be persuaded that his Maker

had so constructed him, that his reason should in any case contradict the daily evidence of his senses. And yet let this man have the Copernican scheme unfolded to him on its most easy and popular evidences, and he will probably become a convert, and acknowledge, that what before contradicted his eyes, and his reason too, must be unquestionably true. The truth is, that what transcends our reason may be also contradictory of it, that is, contrary to all that previous knowledge by which its operations are conducted, and in many cases is so. But this certainly proves nothing against the truth of things; it proves only that our reason is not always sufficiently enlightened to come to certain determinations, that its data are defective, and that if in such cases men will come to a judgment, they may contradict the truth, and be contradicted by it: Yet the truth must remain the same; and no exceptions can be fairly taken against the Trinity, the union of two natures in Christ, the mysteries of Providence, the resurrection of the same body, nor even of the eternal Sonship of Christ, if that also should involve a contradiction to reason,—a question to be hereafter examined. If human reason were eternal reason, it could not be contradicted by them; but who shall say how far it is so?

I am aware that it may be said in reply, that the instances I have given do themselves prove that reason may be so improved by instruction, as that the doctrines which appear contradictory at one time shall cease to be so at another, when it is better instructed. Let this be granted, my position holds good, that human reason may be contradicted by truth, and, therefore, the simple circumstance of a doctrine being agreeable to or contradictory of reason is no test of its truth. And if human reason is to be schooled, and instructed, and elevated to some given standard of attainment before it can be qualified to become a judge in matters of revelation, we gain nothing as to the certainty of its decisions, unless Dr. Clarke, or some other advocate of the same system, will tell us how long it is to be kept under tuition before its judging faculty can be matured; unless we are informed how much human knowledge must be attained before a man shall be allowed to act on the authority of his own reason, in interpreting Scrip-

ture, and to deem it infallible. Here the world is left in the dark, and as no such regulations are agreed upon, one of two consequences will follow ; the modest will spend life at school, and never presume to judge ; the bold will break away from it before their education is completed, and dogmatize in premature luxuriance. But what are the unlettered and ignorant to do ? Either it must be allowed that every man's reason, however unschooled, is a standard of revealed doctrine ; or we must come to the shortest and safest way, both for the learned and unlearned,—to search only for the sense of the sacred volume as determined by itself, in utter disregard of a standard which can never be adjusted. Dr. Clarke's allusion to transubstantiation will, however, lead me to some remarks, which will further show, that, though a doctrine may contradict the reason of man, it is not on that account alone to be reputed unworthy of belief.

The Doctor thinks that he has put those who differ from his views of the office of human reason in deciding on Scripture doctrine between the horns of a dilemma, by asserting, that, unless we are allowed to subject the doctrines of Scripture to rational investigation, and to reject what is contradictory to our reason, we must admit the absurdities of transubstantiation. It will be necessary, therefore, for the full understanding of the case, to give to the term "reason" still greater precision of meaning. It does not mean, as used by the Doctor, the faculty or the operation of judging and arguing. When it is said that any proposition contradicts our reason, it can only be meant, therefore, either that it contradicts that previous and supposed certain information respecting the subject of it, which the operation of reasoning has furnished us with ; or, that it contradicts truths we have obtained by the exercise of reason respecting other subjects, and of which we have such evidence, that they and the proposition questioned cannot both be true ; that not only a contradiction to our reason is involved in it, but a contradiction of the truth of things itself. All reasoning is founded upon a comparison of two or more things together, so as to ascertain an agreement or a disagreement, and to affirm or deny something respecting



them. It may be compact or extended, as what is predicated of each is at once understood, or requires the introduction of intermediate ideas to show their relation ; but in all cases it is essential to good reasoning, that we should have determinate ideas of the things themselves which are compared, in the respects in which a comparison is instituted, or we can never ascertain their relation to each other, or to any intermediate idea which may have a common relation to both. Between what I know, and what I know not, there can be no comparison ; between what I know, and what I imperfectly know, there can be no certain or complete comparison, and no determinate judgment.

Let me, then, suppose it affirmed of a person whom I have never seen, that he has lost the faculty of sight. This, if credibly stated, and with no apparent intention to deceive me, I at once assent to ; for I know so much of the human eye as to be certain that it is liable to accidents and diseases fatal to its faculty of seeing. The comparison here is between subjects of which I have an adequate knowledge. But let me suppose it afterwards reported, that the same person, after having lost the use of his eyes, had acquired so delicate a sense of touch, as, by that sense, to distinguish colours with great accuracy.\* There are few persons, I believe, who would not treat such a report with ridicule, and pronounce it impossible, and contrary to reason ; that is, contrary to all those facts and deductions which have been generally admitted among men. Had I never heard of such an occurrence, attended with evidence sufficient to convince very incredulous men, who had attempted to ascertain the fact, I should probably join in the same issue. And yet, imperfectly as I am acquainted with the nature of sensation, it would be somewhat bold in me peremptorily to deny, that the touch may not become in any circumstances so exquisite as to distinguish that different arrangement of the particles composing the sur-

\* There are, apparently, well-established facts of this nature on record. The most recent is the case of a young lady in Liverpool, lately published by a Physician of that town.

faces of bodies, which produces those various reflections of the rays of light on which colours depend ; and what would be contradictory to my reason might not be contradictory to fact, or to the truth of things. My error may lie in considering certain truths to be universal which are not so, or in considering them as certain tests of a subject to which they do not, or but partially, apply. If I fearlessly, therefore, apply my rule of judging to a subject of which I have only an imperfect acquaintance, my reason may prove a very erring guide. The point I would press is, that in judging of things which are but imperfectly known,—in comparing what we know little of with what we know,—so as to affirm or deny any thing concerning them, our reason, or, what is the same thing, our present knowledge, may be contradicted, and yet there may be no contradiction of the truth of things itself. Such are all the comparisons between what we know from the deductions of human reason and the observation of mankind, and the nature and attributes of the ever-blessed and infinite God. The comparison is between what is known, and what is, except in very partial and dim revelation, unknown ; between the creature and the Creator ; between man and God. Is it possible that such a process can be attended with any certainty ? Is it not even certain that it must induce infinite mistakes ? And who, that gives these very evident truths the least consideration, can admit the proposition laid down by Dr. Clarke : “ No man either can or should believe a doctrine which contradicts reason ; ” no, not, as the sense of the paragraph fixes it, when that doctrine relates to the nature of God himself. I shall confirm the contrary view I have taken by a quotation from another eminent author : “ In other sciences, such as geometry, &c., their foundation, or knowledge of what relation things bear to each other, is by their agreement with some third being or proposition, to which their relation is mutual and equal ; but here there is no medium whereunto we can compare the divine nature ; and to imagine reason could wade through the vast abyss to unknown regions, and proceed with certainty to the apprehension of it, is no more than enthusiasm and chimera ; a power which God and nature have

denied to it. There are limits given to every created being, and bounds set that it cannot pass, beyond which all things are dark and impenetrable. This is the condition of man. He has faculties to receive what God vouchsafes to reveal of himself; this is the limit of human understanding, it can add nothing thereto. To receive larger emanations, is the privilege of the blessed; to know all of himself, the incommunicable prerogative of God."

But in cases of comparing things where both are known, so far known, that all men, in all ages, and under all circumstances, are agreed respecting their nature and qualities, from constant and universal experience and observation, it would destroy the certainty of all human knowledge to apply the same observations. The question of transubstantiation is, therefore, wholly distinct from doctrines relative to the divine nature. It concerns not the divine nature of Christ; but his human body, which was truly a body like our own; and we have surely sufficient means of judging, from experience, whether it be a quality of the human body to be in two places at the same time, and that also invisibly, under the forms of bread and wine; whether it can be divided into innumerable pieces, and yet be whole. "The question," says Mr. Fletcher, in his answer to Dr. Priestley, "between the Popes and us, with respect to transubstantiation, is quite within our reach, since it is only whether bread be flesh and bones; whether wine be human blood; whether the same identical body can be wholly in heaven, and in a million of places on earth at the same time; and whether a thin round wafer, an inch in diameter, is the real person of a man six feet high: Here we only decide about things known to us from the cradle, and concerning which our experience and our five senses help us to form a right judgment, agreeably to the tenor of the Scriptures; therefore, considering that the two cases are diametrically contrary, and differ as much as the depths of the divine nature differ from a piece of bread, as much as the most incomprehensible thing in heaven differs from the things we know best upon earth, we are bold to say, when the learned Doctor involves the Protestant worshippers

of the Trinity, and the Popish worshippers of a bit of bread, in the same charge of absurd idolatry, he betrays as great a degree of unphilosophical prejudice, and illogical reasoning, as ever a learned and wise man was driven to, in the height of a disputation for a favourite error." \*

It is not, however, to be concluded, that, though the doctrine of transubstantiation contradicts our reason, and that of all mankind, we are left to resort at all to this argument to prove that it is not a doctrine of Scripture. If the question of the eternal Sonship of Christ, the Trinity, or any other respecting the divine nature, presented to our inquiries subjects which we had equal means of knowing, as whether a human body can be in heaven and earth at the same time ; and if, on the other hand, transubstantiation were affirmed of a subject as little known to us as the divine nature, and as plainly expressed, or as necessarily implied, in many passages of Scripture as the doctrines just mentioned ; the cases would be parallel, and we should equally disclaim the judgment of reason in both cases : But if even we were to admit the necessity of an appeal to reason in the case of transubstantiation, as it in reality stands, we should neither give up the principles I have been endeavouring to establish, nor in the least sanction that which Dr. Clarke has assumed, and attempted to defend ; for the question would not be, Are passages of Scripture containing declarations respecting a Being who is incomprehensible to us, to be turned out of their plain and obvious meaning, because my reason determines against the doctrines they teach ? but, whether in a case where the question lies, if we admit a question at all, chiefly in the literal or figurative meaning of terms, the knowledge which God himself has put within our reach as to the essential properties of things of his creation, and which even a miracle cannot change without destroying the substance of which they are the essential properties, is to be applied to fix their meaning. Such an application of our reason to such a subject, and in a mere question of figurative or literal interpretation, is

\* Fletcher's Works, vol. ix., p. 44.

perfectly within the scope of my own views ; but even that is not at all necessary. The case does not need it. Even the Papists cannot carry their literal meaning throughout, and are obliged to give up this mode of interpretation, by considering the cup as a metonymy for the wine ; and the whole doctrine is swept away by the declarations, that Christ was about to leave his disciples ; that his coming to judgment is his coming again the “second time ;” and that “the heavens are to receive him until the time of the restitution of all things.” When we have decisions so clear in Scripture on this subject, there is not the least necessity for an appeal to reason : Were that necessary, the case would not be parallel to those which respect any doctrine of the divine nature.

I have before remarked, that the great error from which the rest of the false principles laid down in that part of Dr. Clarke’s Commentary on which I have animadverted are derived, is the assuming that human reason and eternal reason are the same. This has been sufficiently exposed : But it may be allowed that the notion is not altogether without foundation ; and this, indeed, constitutes its danger. It requires great art to present a proposition of unmingled error in the garb of truth. The most mischievous positions in theology are those which have some great and acknowledged truth for their basis ; but which carry it to an unwarranted extent, or give it wholly a wrong direction. Too many persons receive the whole argument, for the sake of the truth it contains, not staying to consider with how much error it may be mixed, or what false conclusions are hung upon it. To apply these observations to the case before us : It cannot be doubted, incautiously and erroneously as the principle has been applied, that human reason, when illuminated by revelation, is raised into a very interesting correspondence with eternal reason : The mind of God is imparted to man, and the mind of man is to a certain extent elevated in its knowledge to the wisdom of God. I am not an advocate for urging the extremes of the case only, and for placing the reason of man unnecessarily in opposition to the decisions of his Maker. Truth in the revelation of Scripture is not always stated on mere authority ;

there is often a condescension to us as rational creatures, and we are permitted to rise a few steps towards that state where the reason of things will be more largely unfolded to our inquiring faculties. The tree of knowledge is not wholly forbidden to us ; for, though its topmost branches are under interdict, there are boughs which bend to our reach beneath the weight of wholesome and exhilarating fruit. The great Author of revelation has accompanied some of the doctrines of his word with rational evidence ; and has appealed to our reason, not, indeed, to give us the option of choosing or rejecting them ; he has in no instance made reason a judge with the right of laying down the law of the case ; but the appeal is made for our deeper conviction, and to render us the more inexcusable if we reject the doctrines thus laid down on the joint authority of their Author and their own evidence. He declares his power and majesty, and refers us to the magnificence of universal nature ; he directs us for the proof of several of his moral perfections to his works of providence and judgment ; various duties are enjoined upon us in terms which indicate that principles we have acknowledged bind us to their observance. “ If I be a master, where is my fear ? if I be a father, where is mine honour ? ” “ If ye who are evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask him ? ” Some rational evidence is afforded of the atonement, though not by any means all the reasons on which that most stupendous of all the acts of God’s government reposes. It was a scheme of admirable wisdom to reconcile opposite attributes, rights, and claims, in mercy to the penitent guilty ; it at once declared the love and justice of the sovereign Lord of man ; and the scheme is commended by two most important considerations, which lie level to every man’s understanding, that it is at once the strongest expression of the love of God, and affords the firmest hope to guilty man : All these ideas we find in the New Testament. Other doctrines might be adduced, in which some rays of rational evidence beam forth from the depths of those mysteries in which they are still embosomed ; and I will grant, that it is one of our

most delightful employments to collect these rays, and, with them, at once to illuminate, adorn, and defend our systems; for this "glory is a defence," though not their only or chief one. It may be granted, too, that the pleasure arising from this discovery of the rational evidence of the truths of our holy religion is a powerful motive to such investigations. There is more virtue in faith; but more pleasure in increasing knowledge. There is in this a rising from the child to the man, an approximation to the illuminations of a future state; and, probably, the minds of the pious are thus previously disciplined for the more vigorous efforts of the intellect in the full vision of God. All this I most readily allow; to deny it, would be to surround our religion with an exclusive aspect of stern command and authority, and deprive it of its traits of affecting condescension.

But from all these admissions, the principles laid down by Dr. Clarke derive not the slightest support. It is very probable that the satisfaction inquiring men have felt when discoveries have been made, the clearness and conviction brought to their reason by them, may have led to the erroneous idea that reason itself is an adequate judge of such doctrines; and from having decided so much to their own edification on certain points, and so consistently with the truth of God, they have had confidence enough in their reason to approach unexplained mysteries in hope of similar success. But they have utterly overlooked the great facts of the case: It was not their reason which made the discovery of the rational evidence of any of the lower doctrines we have mentioned; but God was pleased to accompany the revelation of them with some discovery of their reasonableness. Human reason was but the receptive, not the discursive, faculty; and the principles of our former knowledge appealed to by the word of God, (principles which before were without any authoritative application to such subjects,) became from that moment fixed in an appropriate application to them by the authority of God himself. I may very aptly adduce for an illustration the words of Christ I have already cited: "If ye who are evil know how to give good gifts," &c. No process of human reasoning could

have inferred from the tenderness of earthly parents, the superior compassions of our heavenly Father towards us. At every stage of such a process we should have been met by the chilling considerations of the immense difference in these relations; and the majesty of the Sovereign, and the guilt of rebels, would have presented themselves in company with the relations of father and children. The comparison is now one on which we may erect our hope with confidence; because it is authorized, and the reason of the case is determined by the revelation of God: And this applies equally to every instance in which our understandings are not only enriched with doctrines, but our judgment instructed by the reasons with which God has been pleased to accompany them. So far, then, are these interesting condescensions to the reason of man in the revelation of God, from supporting the principle, that every doctrine which will not bear the test of rational examination ought to be rejected, that nothing lies more strongly against it. So far from this circumstance giving any qualification to reason to judge of doctrines of which no rational evidence is afforded in revelation, that even as to those doctrines which have some degree of accompanying rational evidence, human reason cannot add to the evidence. It may place it in different views, present it in various arrangements; but it owes all its light to the revelation, and cannot go beyond it. With even the clue in its hand, it extricates itself no farther from the labyrinth than it is led by the hand of inspiration. Take, for instance, the doctrine of atonement. Some illustrations, as I have observed, of this great display of the wisdom of God are found in the sacred record; but all that has been written on the subject in the way of rational defence, from the commencement of Christianity until now, (and it has employed the most able pens,) has been no more than an amplification of the doctrine briefly but fully stated in Scripture, that redemption is an efficient scheme for uniting the rights and character of the moral Governor of the world with a merciful regard to his guilty creatures and subjects, with some other collateral representations. What more than this has been said has been felt, both by its author and his readers, as conjecture and



theory, which has had no authority, because it has had no demonstration. If this, then, be the fact as to doctrines whose reasons are partly revealed, how can reason be the judge of those which are stated on naked authority? All here is darkness, which if the sun has not dispersed, the light of the glow-worm may be applied to it in vain. Where eternal reason has not beamed, human reason cannot be enlightened.

The conclusion of these observations on the office of reason in religion may be thus summed up: The office of reason is to judge of the evidences of the record professing to be a revelation from God; when we are satisfied of the divine authority of Scripture, our understanding is to be employed humbly, and with dependence upon God, in ascertaining its sense; and whatever doctrine is there stated, or necessarily implied by the harmony of its different parts, is to be admitted, believed, and held fast, whether it corroborate or contradict the notions which our previous or collateral reasonings have led us to adopt.

I know that there is nothing here so dazzling as in the principles on which I have animadverted: It is more flattering to the human mind to be accounted a judge, than to be reduced to the rank of a scholar; to be placed in a condition to summon divine wisdom to its bar, and oblige it to give an account of the reasons of its decisions, than to receive them upon authority: But this is the safe, because the humble, path; and I greatly mistake if it be not also the true way to high illumination in the things of God: "The meek he will teach in his way." It is to the patient, prayerful study of divine truth, by its own light, that its harmonies, and connexions, and beauties most freely reveal themselves; as the bud discloses to the solar light the graces it refuses to the hand of violence.

I am not unaware, that the learned Commentator on whom I have so freely remarked will, at least partially, demur to the view I have given of the principles he has laid down in the conclusion of his valuable work: I have drawn them out to a length to which he probably did not mean them to extend. This I am anxious to believe: But my business is with what he has said, and not with what he might intend; for it is by

what he has said that his opinions will influence and direct others in their religious inquiries. The principles have been taken in their true logical sense, and in the meaning of the terms in which they are expressed, as those terms are and must be understood in the conventional language of mankind. There are great errors, in my view, in the principles themselves, after every explanation which can accord with the meaning of language has been given ; but there are still greater arising out of the loose and even contradictory manner in which they are expressed. If followed out as they stand in the Commentary, they would inevitably lead to the greatest errors ; and if by some subtlety Dr. Clarke can himself accommodate them to correct views on religious subjects, he ought certainly to have remembered, that his readers have not generally that adroitness. If he can poise himself in walking the bridge he has thrown over the gulfs of error,—a bridge narrowed to greater sharpness than that which Mahomet is said to have laid for the transit of the faithful from earth to heaven,—he would have done well to consider how many, less experienced than himself, would also venture upon it, and be probably plunged into a gulf of too hopeless a depth to admit return. This is a serious consideration, which he has too much regard for the truths he holds sacred, and too much love for the souls of men, not to be impressed with. He has authority ; but that imposes the obligation of severe caution upon the writer who possesses it : And I do hope, though what I can say upon the subject cannot be supposed to have great weight with him, that when he reflects upon the number of his readers, and the extent of influence which his Commentary possesses ; that the opinions of so many of our young people will be formed upon it, and that it is in the nature of man to overlook the good principles in such a work, and to fix chiefly on those which are exceptionable ; and especially that the turn of thinking among the young men who are introduced into the ministry, in that body of which he is so distinguished an ornament, will probably be greatly determined by their constant recourse to his biblical labours ; that he will feel greatly anxious to remove from a work which will carry down his name to posterity with honour, any principle

which, however innocently held by himself, can by probable construction lead to Arian and Socinian errors, and smooth the path

“ ——— to that Serbonian bog  
Where armies whole have sunk.”

This remark I apply chiefly to his concluding observations on the subject of reason ; a page which, if not entirely cancelled, can only be rendered harmless by being partially expunged. Surely it must be one of the noblest objects of the ambition of the author of a work of so much authority and influence, that it should not contain an injurious principle ; not even a line,

“ Which, dying, he would wish to blot.”

Before I conclude a letter which has lengthened under my hands much beyond my first intention, I shall introduce a few remarks on the arguments from reason, which Dr. Clarke has turned against the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of our Lord. From what I have already said, you will perceive that I cannot attach great importance to this part of the discussion. If the principles laid down in the preceding pages be correct, it is of small consideration whether the doctrine in question be to me reasonable or not, provided I find it in the sense of Scripture ; and I hold it to be a proper homage to such principles to say, that the truth itself is not to be prejudiced by the reasonings of men. The objections of Dr. Clarke on this subject are, however, by no means inexpugnable ; and that they may be before you, I quote them below.\*

\* “ If Christ be the Son of God as to his divine nature, then he cannot be eternal ; for Son implies a Father, and Father implies, in reference to Son, precedence in time, if not in nature too. Father and Son imply the idea of generation ; and generation implies a time in which it was effected, and time also antecedent to such generation. If Christ be the Son of God, as to his divine nature, then the Father is of necessity prior, consequently, superior, to him. Again : If this divine nature were begotten of the Father, then it must be in time ; that is, there was a period in which it did not exist, and a period when it began to exist. This destroys the eternity of our blessed Lord, and

To these objections, which to me appear extremely futile, as founded upon mere human analogies, and in which there is substantially nothing beyond a comparison between man and man, though the comparison is ostensibly, what indeed it ought in fairness to have been in reality, between man and God; the following quotation from a note by the Editor of Doddridge's Lectures, printed in 1804, appears an ample answer:—

“Persons of opposite sentiments in other respects have objected to the terms ‘eternal generation,’ and ‘begotten,’ when applied to a person properly divine, as implying derivation and inferiority; and censures have been liberally (or rather illiberally) cast on those who hold the sentiment, as if either destitute of common sense, or disposed to digest contradictions. But may we not suppose, without any forfeiture of candour, that such a censure may possibly be too precipitate, by assuming that they fully comprehended the sentiment expressed by such terms? The following hints, disclaiming the tone of a dictator, are submitted to consideration:—

“1. The terms ‘generation’ and ‘begetting’ do not include any voluntary act *ad extra*; for, if so, they who use them would have no cause of difference with Arians; but rather denote a necessary act *ad intra*. They hold, that as the divine existence, life, and activity are independent on will, so is personality.

“2. Another consideration of great moment in this controversy, but often very much out of sight, is the strict co-existence of Persons. For want of due attention to the nature of the subject, the mind is deceived by the sound of words; for no sooner is it said, that the Son is ‘the only-begotten of the Father,’ than we form, if unguarded, the idea of priority in the Father, and posteriority in the Son. But

robs him at once of his Godhead. To say that he was begotten from all eternity, is, in my opinion, absurd; and the phrase ‘eternal Son’ is a positive contradiction. Eternity is that which has had no beginning, nor stands in any reference to time. Son supposes time, generation, and father, and time also antecedent to such generation. Therefore the conjunction of these two terms, Son and eternity, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and opposite ideas.”—*Note on Luke i. 35.*

even among men, notwithstanding the infinite disparity between the First Cause and a human being, between the voluntary acts of a creature and a necessary property of God, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to form an idea of fatherhood and sonship, but as correlative and co-existent. One may indeed exist as a man before his son, but not as the father of such a son. In the order of existence, as conceived by a Trinitarian, the notion of essence is prior to that of personality, as it is prior to that of attributes; but as to personal relations, or positive modes of subsistence, there is no more reason to suppose priority, than there is in saying that goodness in God is prior to wisdom, and power posterior to both.

“ 3. Through carnal associations we find a difficulty in preserving the subject itself, and that to which it bears a partial analogy, sufficiently distinct. Thus, among men, a father has a personal subsistence prior to his fatherhood; but not so in the present subject. In this doctrine no personal subsistence is to be conceived prior to fatherhood and sonship; nay, these relations are supposed to constitute the personalities. For if there be no Son, there can be no personal Father, and *vice versa*. The term ‘Father’ is not always used in a personal sense, but often answers to the Creator, because we are his offspring; or Governor, because we are his family.

“ 4. The proper use of illustrations by comparison is not to prove the doctrine, but to show from analogy the possibility of what is apprehended to be the collected meaning of revelation on the subject. Suppose, then, the infinite mind, as to essence, to be necessarily active, or life itself, is there any thing unreasonable in the thought of a *terminus a quo*, and a *terminus ad quem*, relative to this essential energy and life antecedent to will? Is it impossible that these *termini* should contribute relative properties, which may not improperly be called subsistences or persons? Is it not possible that this infinite and infinitely active life should be denominated, according to the collective sense of revelation, as a relative property *a quo*, the Father; and the same life, as a

relative property *ad quem*, the Son ; while the essential energy of this life terminating *ad quem* is eternal generation or begetting? Again, is there any thing absurd in the supposition that this infinitely active life, proceeding *in medio a duobus terminis*, should constitute another distinctive relative property called Spirit?

“ 5. In all works *ad extra*, the effects of power and will, no one person acts exclusively of the other ; therefore, no work *ad extra*, whether creation, redemption, or any other whatever, can be the distinguishing cause of these relative properties. Is it not, then, a possible and a rational notion, and intelligible language, when it is said, that Father, Son, and Spirit, (into the name of whom Christians were to be baptized,) are these positive, real, or personal modes of subsistence in God, or one infinitely active life ; and, that the Son of God, by eternal generation, assumed our nature into personal union with himself, thus constituting a glorious Mediator between sinners and the divine nature, which, though in itself love, is consuming fire to offenders?

“ The sentiment of eternal generation, and that which represents Father, Son, and Spirit, as terms of distinctive personal relations, seems much less exceptionable to many who have long considered both sides, than that which holds these terms as expressive of works or offices *ad extra*, while yet a Trinity of Persons is acknowledged. For it may be urged, either these divine Persons have essential distinctive characters, or they have not ; if not, with what propriety can they be called three Persons ? The idea of three distinct Beings is disclaimed, and yet here are supposed three Persons without any difference of distinctive characters ; that is, a diversity without any assignable ground of difference. But if they have essential distinctive characters, what are they, if not those held by consistent Athanasians, in some respects corresponding with the terms begetting, begotten, and proceeding, as before explained ? If it be said, the works of redemption ; it may be replied, These are works *ad extra*, and therefore belong to each Person. Is any divine perfection, as love, goodness, mercy, wisdom, power, or the like, a sufficient ground of per-

sonal distinction? Surely that person is not divine that possesses not each alike, and in an infinite degree."

The sum of this argument, as to the paternity of the first Person of the Trinity and the eternal Sonship of the second, divested of its scholastic form, may be thus placed against the objections of Dr. Clarke.

"Son," says Dr. Clarke, "implies a father, and father implies, in reference to son, precedency in time." This is, substantially, all that is said in refutation of the doctrine; for the rest is this argument put only in different forms. Now, "in reference to Son," no priority of the Father is supposed in the doctrine of the divine Sonship of Christ; for no father, as father, is prior to his son; and no son, as son, is posterior to his father; no one is a father who has not a son.

Nor is it true, as to the divine nature, that if Christ be the begotten of the Father, he must have been produced in time, and, consequently, cannot be eternal; for this mode of existence implies no voluntary act, which is merely assumed by Dr. Clarke. It neither necessarily implies it, nor is the term used by Divines in this sense. If the whole existence of God be a necessary existence, then all its essential modes and relations are necessarily existent too, and therefore eternal; and if the correlatives, Father and Son, are used to express essential, necessarily existent, and, consequently, eternal, relations, in this there is nothing contradictory. Derivation may be an essential attribute, and is often so in fact. It is an essential property of the sun to give light; and the beaming of the light is therefore co-existent with the sun, because an essential property. Christ is therefore called, in the Nicene Creed, "Light of light," in perfect accordance with inspired Scripture, where his designation is, "the streaming forth, the refulgence, of his Father's glory;" and is therefore coeval with him. Again: Among men, the relation of son, though it cannot suppose the priority of a father, as a father, does yet suppose his priority as a man: This arises out of circumstances utterly incapable of application to God, though Dr. Clarke has confounded them. Before a man can be capable of the

relation of father, he must himself be born and come to maturity ; but where is the comparison between such a being and Him who is “ from everlasting to everlasting God ; ” who has ever existed in the potentiality and energy of his nature ? There is and can be no resemblance ; he is essential and perfect life, and was so from everlasting. Little, therefore, as I think of the argument from reason, the reason is not on the other side ; and no sufficient proofs have been urged against the doctrine by its opponents. For any thing that even reason can demonstrate, Christ may be a Son, and yet eternal ; eternally flowing from the bosom of paternal Deity, who is the first in order, though not in time. The first Person in the adorable Trinity may be a Father without priority of being ; and we may still, in the sense in which the words have been commonly understood, join together in our worship, and say, “ Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.” But a truce to these reasonings : I willingly give them all up for a single word of the testimony of God. I affect them not ; they seem to bring me too irreverently near to God : I would not “ break through and gaze ; ” and I feel, while I write, how just, and yet how reproving, are the words of the poet of Paradise,—

“ Dark with excessive light his skirts appear,  
Yet dazzle heaven ; that brightest seraphim  
Approach not ; but with both wings veil their eyes.”

I shall conclude, therefore, by only noticing an opinion which has been given by some, that, provided the Deity of Christ be held, the tenet of his eternal Sonship is of trifling import, whether true or not. From this opinion I dissent for the following reasons :—

1. No man who loves the truth can consent to a doctrine, great or small, which has even any show of being taught in the word of God, being given up, except on scriptural evidence. The principle of rejecting it, because it is not a reasonable doctrine, is one which, if the doctrine itself were of minor importance, is so serious in its consequences, as to unsettle the faith of men in all Christian mysteries, from the



great “mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,” to every other.

2. I cannot consider any thing which the Bible has declared concerning Christ to be unimportant. What God has determined to be so important as to make the subject of a revelation, is surely of sufficient importance for man to consider with all seriousness.

3. But the subject is in itself of the highest importance connected as it is with the personality of our Lord. If there be not a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, I cannot conceive of a divine atonement for sin. If God had not had a Son to send into the world, by whom the world might be saved, no other being in heaven or earth was adequate to offer a full perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the human race. The notions of a Trinity, and of such an atonement as might be expected from their necessary connexion, have, in most cases, stood or fallen together. Any doctrine, therefore, which at all goes to weaken the evidence of the essential personality of Christ, ought to be considered a very serious one; and the denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ is unquestionably a great abatement of this evidence. Besides “Son of God,” there is, as far as I recollect, no other term applied to Christ, which simply, and in itself, and without recurring to other evidence, expresses his divine personality. “Lord” does not: That may apply to the authority of the Deity, considered as one, or may be an official name of Christ. “Jesus” does not: That is a designation of his humanity. “Christ” does not: That, too, is an official term. “Word” does not: If it signify discourse, it is a term of office: If reason or wisdom, it is, as far as the mere term goes, nothing more than the name of a quality; and has been considered by the perverters of God’s word, in the first chapter of St. John’s Gospel, as no more than an attribute of God personified. But let the term “Son of God” be established as the scriptural designation of the divine nature of our Lord and Saviour, and the idea of divine and proper personality is eternally preserved in our opinions respecting him: Let us show, first, that the Son is divine, and we escape Socinianism;

and, second, that he is divine as a Son, and we shun the Sabellian heresy,—that sliding path which infallibly, though by easy descent, has conducted thousands to join the ranks of those who “deny the Lord that bought them.”

It has, I know, been urged by some as a reason for adopting Dr. Clarke's views on the Sonship of Christ, that they remove a difficulty from the doctrine of the Trinity. This is, indeed, their most delusive aspect; and the more may cursory readers be influenced by the fallacy, as they feel that the Deity of Christ is an essential doctrine of Christianity. But does the difficulty from which they think themselves relieved, press upon their faith or upon their reason? If upon the former, a moral defect is to be suspected; for whoever feels it difficult to admit the testimony of God in his word, is not brought under the full moral influence of the Gospel. The question still recurs, Is the eternal Sonship of Christ a doctrine of Scripture? If it be rejected because the Bible is silent on the subject, the proceeding is legitimate: If, because it is a difficulty, and the depositions of Scripture are to be disregarded that the difficulty may not press, the ground is changed; and we have laid down the principle that we will believe no difficult doctrine, though the Scriptures declare it. On such a basis no Christian system can possibly stand; it is a pyramid on its point, nodding to its fall. But if a difficulty be removed from our reason, our joy in the discovery ought not to be suffered to take its excursions of airy delight, until we first interrogate ourselves, whether the doctrine be one which can in its nature be tested by reason; whether in this process we have proceeded on authority. Sober theologians would also inquire, whether by freeing ourselves from one difficulty we do not entangle ourselves in many others; whether we shall not find, on the newly adopted scheme, additional difficulty in establishing the personalities in the Godhead; whether we shall not find it, not merely more difficult, but even impossible, to make out any meaning of half the passages in the sacred volume which speak of Christ as the Son of God, except by those lax and paraphrastic interpretations which we so justly protest against in those whose heresies we condemn, and which

yield a meaning much below our present faith. This would be to purchase a relief from difficulty at much too dear a price ; but in itself, and separate from consequences, the relief is worth nothing. It is, to my mind at least, a very strong argument *à priori* against any scheme, that it renders a doctrine of pure revelation less difficult to reason. I am inclined to say of it, as Chillingworth of novelties, “ What is new in divinity is false.” All such doctrines as to human reason, whether they are contrary to it, or transcend it, are in their nature difficult, and difficult because they are true ; and, startling as it may appear to those who pay so much homage to the efficiency of their reason, difficult in proportion as they are revealed. “ God manifest,” revealed, “ in the flesh,” constitutes emphatically the “ great mystery of godliness.” The pretence of relieving the difficulties of such subjects has, in all ages of the church, smoothed the path to error. Arianism came in with this promise ; Socinianism gave further relief to rational difficulties ; Deism cut the knot, and spurned the fragments. “ To the law,” then, “ and to the testimony.” The outer court is yet our place ; the veil of the holiest is not yet drawn aside, except to faith ; and the great virtue of Divines, like that of writers, is to know where to stop.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

RICHARD WATSON.

LONDON,

January 10th, 1818.

**AN**

**AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS**

**TO THOSE**

**TRUSTEES, STEWARDS, LOCAL PREACHERS,**  
**AND LEADERS,**

**OF**

**THE LONDON SOUTH CIRCUIT,**

**WHOSE NAMES ARE AFFIXED TO CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS,**

**BEARING DATE, SEPTEMBER 23, 1828.**

**THIRD EDITION.**



AN

## AFFECTIONATE ADDRESS,

&c.

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MY DEAR BRETHREN,

MY personal knowledge of several of you who have signed the Resolutions above mentioned, and the hope that you may weigh attentively what I shall dispassionately, and in the most friendly spirit, suggest to you on the subject of the document to which you have put your names, are the reasons why I address myself to your attention.

With many of my brethren, I indeed hoped that, upon reflection, and the conversations which your Address must have occasioned, you would have felt that you had been greatly misled in attaching your names to opinions which, however plausibly presented to you, are easily shown to be wholly inconsistent with the essential and fundamental principles upon which the Connexion to which you belong has been ever established. Since, however, I find, from the recent circulation of your Resolutions in this and some neighbouring Circuits, that you are, by your zeal, likely to commit yourselves still farther, and to render it the more difficult to retrace your steps, (for in proportion to the pains we take to disseminate our views, we place ourselves under a stronger temptation to resist all evidence of their deceptiveness,) I feel disposed to undertake the not agreeable, but still the friendly, office of pointing out the errors into which you have fallen.

I cannot perceive, from your Resolutions, that you have any grievance to urge springing from the government of your successive Superintendents in your own Circuit, or from the inter-

ference of the Conference in any case which has arisen among yourselves. You have gone on from year to year in peace ; no individual and no society in your Circuit having had any reason to complain, yourselves being judges, of oppression and injustice. The pious among you have been nurtured ; you have increased in number ; and our discipline has preserved your purity, and, till very recently, your peace. A system which has for so long a time accomplished its proposed purpose in your religious conversion, your edification, and your purity, cannot, one should suppose, be very far wrong. Had there been any such disposition to exercise a tyrannical power over our societies by the Conference, and by the Preachers it appoints, as your Resolutions insinuate, is it not somewhat remarkable that you should have no instance of it to allege affecting yourselves ? none drawn from the other metropolitan Circuits, in which there have been occasional disputes ? and that the instance on which you dwell should be so recent, and so far from you ? You have professed your determination not to forsake the body, and you thus still acknowledge the privilege of union with it ; and perhaps, upon reflection, you will find that the good which exists among us is much less mixed with evil than you have hastily admitted ; and that there is a much better reason for your remaining with us, than to oppose a “ growing corruption,” which, after all, may possibly exist only in your own surmisings.

You appear to me, my brethren, in the first place, too much to have lost sight of the fact, that the religious body to which we belong is a Connexion ; that is, a number of societies who have agreed to unite themselves in a common bond of doctrine and discipline, under a common code of regulations and usages, and under a common government. Our societies are not Independent churches. This is an ecclesiastical form which some prefer ; but it is not our form ; nor do I perceive that, in fact, you wish it so to be ; although the great principle of your Resolutions is that of Independency, and accords with no other system. An Independent church can change its ministry, its doctrine, and its discipline, at the pleasure of the majority of its members ; it is complete within itself, and

spurns all external control : But our very union implies the submission of each society to the influence and opinion of the whole ; to the Rules agreed upon, or which may be thought necessary for the benefit of the Connexion at large ; and to those authorities which, by tacit or express consent, are appointed to maintain that Christian “order” in which we have placed ourselves, in furtherance of our religious edification and usefulness,—the only true ends of church communion.

That you have not carefully considered this subject, is proved by the leading principle in your Address to the last Conference, and in your Resolutions ; which is, that Leaders Meetings, Local Preachers’ Meetings, and Quarterly Meetings, are “local jurisdictions,” into which no District-Meeting or Conference has the power to intrude. For how does that principle accord with your connexion with, and subjection to, the whole body ? You must either prove that such an Independency as this principle assumes, has, by the terms of this union, been conceded ; which, if proved, would surprise all with the novel discovery that the Connexion is not one body, as it has always been thought ; but a coalition of Independent societies, which it was never before assumed to be, in any disputes which have arisen on constitutional points : Or, failing of that proof, I think you must perceive that the principle you have laid down is wholly inconsistent with that form of ecclesiastical order with which you have voluntarily chosen to connect yourselves. If the question be, whether our societies shall now, for the first time, take the Independent form of church government, let that be fairly proposed and argued upon its own merits ; but if, as I believe, you wish not to moot such a question, at least the majority of you, then ask yourselves whether you can abide by your own Resolutions. When, and how, that control and interference which is implied in a union like ours, is to be exercised, are distinct questions, on which more may be said in the sequel ; but that each of our societies is subject, by the very nature of its union with the body, to the control of that body, through its authorities, in order to the accomplishment of the holy ends of its institution, is so obvious, that no contrary principle can be set up without



involving a change in the very essence of the system, and renouncing that "constitution" which you profess yourselves so zealous to "maintain."

Since the Connexion cannot act but through the authorities to which I have adverted, you will allow me a few words upon this subject: which, as it has often, in such disputes, been very vaguely spoken of, I will enter into with you very frankly: For the more clearly we perceive our system to rest on holy Scripture, and the reason of things, the more firmly I am persuaded shall we be united to maintain and cherish it.

We did not, my brethren, create Methodism. That honour is not ours. We found it, or, rather, it found us; we were welcomed with kindness within its refuge, and we have sat in spiritual safety beneath its shadow. When the oldest of you first turned to its assemblies, inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" it had then, and had long possessed, a doctrine, a discipline, and a common government. That government was in the hands of its Founder; it passed from him, by his own appointment, into the hands of the Conference; and was finally settled there, by consent of all, under certain regulations which respected the administration of its powers. This has been the state of things to this day. We are under a government common to all the societies: that government is vested in the Conference, but subject to various regulations which restrain its exercise. Nothing new in principle has therefore been introduced of which you can complain: and if any just reason of dissatisfaction exists, it can only be found in the acts of the Conference, or of some other subordinate authority, not in any fundamental change of the system.

I do not wish for a moment therefore to disguise the fact, grating as it may be to the ears of those who would wish to govern both us and you, that you are under the government of your Ministers, checked, as I have observed, and, as I think, effectually, against all injurious use of their powers; of which check and restraint I am not only the friend, but would, if required, be the zealous advocate to the best of my ability. But, on the other hand, brethren, much as you have heard of the power of the Conference, I think it very easy to

convince you. that the sum of that power is nothing more than the power which is essentially vested in each Minister, by the very duties which he is under scriptural obligation to perform ; with the addition of that conventional authority which arises out of the voluntary act of each member of the body, in choosing that form of church government which excludes Independency, and takes that of a Connexion.

You acknowledge us to be Ministers of Christ. and Pastors of his church ; for if, as to the legitimacy of our ministry, we have disputes with others, we can have none with you. It is then the duty of a Minister, not only to preach the Gospel, but to collect all who profess to have received his message into communion with the church of Christ ; this being an obligatory ordinance of God. It is his duty to watch over all such with pastoral care, in order to their spiritual advancement in knowledge and grace ; and to reprove and rebuke the careless, the obstinate, and unruly, with all "long-suffering and doctrine." It is equally his duty to separate immoral and unruly persons from the flock, after due admonition ; and to show leniency and forbearance, in this exercise of discipline, in hopeful cases. It devolves upon him also to provide for the perpetuation of the ministry, by encouraging those who may give evidence of a fitness and a call to preach the Gospel ; also to appoint subordinate agents to assist him in various departments of his work, when it swells beyond the limit of his personal exertions ; to guard the doctrine of all subordinate Teachers, as well as their conduct ; and to visit all offenders, in this respect, according to the merits of the case. Finally : It is his duty also to excite the people by his exhortations to such liberalities in the proper support of their own religious institutions, in providing for the poor and sick, and in other branches of religious charity, as the Gospel requires ; that they may abound, not only in good works generally, but "in this grace also." All these duties are inherent in the very office of a Christian Pastor ; and all the powers necessary to fulfil them do therefore of right, inalienable right, belong to his office ; and this, whatever form of church government he may minister under, though it should be that of Independency. Nor is it for a

people to deny to their Ministers such powers, any more than to refuse the ministry which God has appointed ; the one being as opposed to Scripture as the other. If they take the ministry as an ordinance of God, they must take it with its duties and with its powers to perform them. That these powers should be unchecked as to their exercise, is a position for which no reasonable man will contend. Both Ministers and people are men, and the imperfect state of the church on earth, and the liability of all to temptation, will show, that whilst the powers of discipline, inherent in the office of the ministry itself, and without which it cannot exist, may be factiously opposed by the errors and passions of the people, so they may be misdirected by the errors and passions of Ministers. To insure, therefore, the right application of the powers of the Christian ministry, the counsel of the “elders” of a church (by whatever name they are called in different societies, matters not) ought to be taken ; and in them ought also to be vested a right to prevent the exercise of these powers for ends not legitimate ; that is, should they be manifestly used for the gratification of private prejudice, interest, ambition, or other unworthy passions. But, whatever provisions for counsel, or for restraint, are devised, two great principles must regulate them all when a church is scripturally constituted : 1. That such provisions imply no transfer of powers inherent in the ministry to those who are not in that office. 2. That the checks, of whatever kind they may be, shall not, under pretence of preventing the misuse of those powers, obstruct the legitimate and scriptural exercise of them for the regulation, edification, and increase of the graces and numbers of the church.

Every Minister, even of an Independent church, has a right to claim these principles, in his agreement to labour with any people. He may be required to take the opinion of his church as to the fitness of persons to be received into their communion ; but he is the person admitting : He may be restrained from excluding until delinquency is proved before the church ; but he is the person excluding : The consent of the people may be taken before the admission of any one

into the ministry ; but he and his brethren in the ministry are the parties ordaining. If his people so act with him as to further the legitimate exercise of his ministry, and to restrain nothing but a mistaken or selfish use of its powers, well ; but if he subject himself to such a control as would make the power of fulfilling his duties dependent absolutely upon others, he would by that act so far divest himself of his office, as to share it with others, whilst he himself remains under its full and sole responsibility to God ; a condition of serious consideration with him, and under which he has certainly no scriptural power to place himself. It is clear that, even in an Independent church, if the office of the Minister be not usurped, and, so to speak, put into a commission of which the Minister himself is but the nominal head, there may be cases of which the ultimate decision must rest with him. Should a church refuse to admit into its communion persons brought to God under his ministry, and on whom he enjoins the scriptural obligation of Christian communion, and that without any reason but a factious opposition ; or should it resist the expulsion of persons notoriously wicked, and proved to be so on unquestionable evidence, from laxity of moral feeling in the majority of the members, or from the same factious spirit ; the rightful, scriptural exercise of his ministry is arrested ; and either he must compel obedience by the force of his authority, or, if a man of conscience, must abandon so rebellious a flock, and seek one of a more Christian character. There is in this case a clear power of pastoral rule, checked as to its exercise, but not to be factiously or corruptly obstructed ; and this rule is manifestly established upon the duties made obligatory upon the Minister, by the very nature of his office itself.

All the difference between this case, and that of a body existing like ourselves in the form of a Connexion, is in favour of the latter. The Ministers that compose it may, in the exercise of their pastoral duties, be restrained, with equal ease and security, from an improper exercise of their scriptural powers, as in an Independent church ; whilst every Minister, when factiously opposed by a society, or any part of a society, instead of being placed in the alterna-

tive of offending his conscience, or of quitting his charge, has the power of resorting to authorities, acknowledged both by the people and by himself, for a redress of the grievance, by the interposition of counsel or discipline, as the case may require. The same advantage is also placed, by such a form of church government, in the hands of the people. It would seldom happen that a whole society would be found thus contumacious and corrupt; but in an Independent church, where can the better part of the members, still anxious to preserve purity of doctrine and discipline, find redress? If a minority, they would have none but in separation; whilst in the case of their being a part of a Connexion, they, equally with the Minister, would have their appeal to the common authority. We may suppose another case, in which a Minister himself might be negligent of his duties in all the respects above mentioned, and yet be supported by the most influential part of an Independent church. Here the Minister himself refuses to exert the powers of his office from a corrupt subserviency to a few, and the rest have no remedy but in separation;—an injustice which is prevented wherever there is a power of appeal to an interposing authority.

The object of these remarks, my brethren, is to remind you that there is in the ministry a scriptural authority to rule the church of God for its edification; that the regulation of its administration is not a repeal of the authority itself; and that both Ministers and people, when formed into a Connexion, possess a privilege which they could not enjoy, if, like the Independent churches, they could call in no aid in cases of partial corruption and contumacy. What, then, is the power of the Conference? As composed of the Ministers of the societies of Methodism, it is itself a body, collectively directing by its counsel the exercise of the powers of the ministry as discharged by individuals, in the reception and expulsion of members, the calling out of Ministers, the maintenance of sound doctrine, the appointment and duties of subordinate officers and assistants in their spiritual work, and the exciting of Christian liberality among the people. Here individual Ministers think that united counsel is the best

directory for the exercise of the duties and powers of their office, and agree to discharge them under a body of common regulations. To the people, as in 1797, are granted certain checks upon the possible abuses of power ; against the possible abuse of which checks themselves, however, an appeal always lay to the Conference from any person whatever thinking himself aggrieved. The whole Connexion has gone on by mutual consent upon these regulations.

The leading guards against undue exercise of power, as to the people, are, that when a Leaders' Meeting declare a person unfit to be admitted into society, no Preacher shall receive him as a member ; and that the delinquency of a member must be proved in the presence of a Leaders' Meeting, before he can be expelled. These instances are sufficient for my argument ; and I need not, therefore, go into the case of Local Preachers, Trustees, Leaders, or into financial regulations. The question then before us is, whether the Conference in 1797, or at any other time, conceded more than a power to guard the exercise of the rights of the ministry against abuse ; or whether it divided the duties and powers of the ministry with the Leaders' Meeting. If the latter, we who are in the ministry, much more than you, are concerned in the new discovery which has been made as to the meaning of the Rules of 1797 ; for if the Conference then introduced a power, in the strict sense, co-ordinate with the ministry, and placed the discharge of its duties conjointly in the Preachers and those Meetings ; then it left us with all the weight of our responsibility to God, who has called us to these duties, who has made it obligatory upon us to discharge them at our peril ; and yet made the power, not merely to guard the manner of their performance, but to discharge them at all, under any circumstances, dependent upon co-ordinate authorities ; then has a Leaders' Meeting, in all cases, no matter how unfounded, the power to forbid us to receive members into the church, to restrain us from expelling immoral members, to oblige us not to show leniency to the penitent, to prevent us from banishing away "strange doctrines,"—and so of every other ministerial duty ; and that simply by withholding its concurrence ; for

if it is a co-ordinate power, in no case can we act without its concurrence. Nor is there any advantage derived here from our existing as a Connexion, since all appeal is shut out : And if this surrender of ministerial rights forms a part of the compact, the reasoning in your Address and Resolutions is sound ; the Conference itself cannot interfere to relieve any case, however flagrant ; and both Ministers, and the sound part of our people, are left without remedy. No absurdity, however, can be greater than that which this strange and novel view attributes to the Conference of 1797 ; namely, that it should make co-Pastors of men who are not Pastors ; co-Ministers of our excellent friends, the Leaders, who never professed to be Ministers ; and so invest them with the duties and powers of an office which they disclaim. They knew well, and you also upon reflection must see, that certain powers are inseparable from the duties of the ministry, and cannot be transferred or put into commission with those who have not this calling ; and that, therefore, the Rules of 1797 were intended to guard the exercise of these powers by the Preachers, but in no case either to abolish them, or to transfer them to others. The Conference of 1797 retained, and could not but retain, for the Ministers of the body, all these powers to fulfil the work and office of the ministry, whilst it conceded to the people certain privileges by which those powers were in their administration to be regulated.

The power to discharge the scriptural duties of our office being then inherent in every Minister among us charged with pastoral duties, the Conference in maintaining this power has assumed no authority but what belongs scripturally to each of its members. It has, however, a conventional power arising out of the voluntary association of the body according to our form of church government. As a Connexion we look up to it as the common governing body to which all are subject. This was necessarily supposed in the regulations of 1797 For if, on the one hand, the Conference could make no surrender of the powers essential to the ministry ; and, on the other, consented to certain regulations being imposed upon their administration ; how was that “ compact,” as you term it, to

be enforced against those who might attempt its violation, in either direction, but by the Conference itself? If a Preacher had proceeded to expel a member without respect to the Rule requiring his guilt to be proved in the presence of a Leaders' Meeting, to whom would the appeal have been made by the Meeting, but to the Conference, or to its subordinate authorities? Not only the right, but the duty, of its interference would then have been asserted by you, and that justly. If then a case should, on the other hand, arise, in which a Preacher should be factiously obstructed in the legitimate exercise of the duties of his ministry, was the Preacher, and was that part of the people remaining faithful to these duties and to these principles, to be cut off from the same benefit of their own form of church government,—that of having a common court of appeal, and a common government,—under pretence that the Conference cannot interfere with “local jurisdictions?” Such a pretence is as unjust as it is absurd, because it forces upon one party the control of a common discipline, and leaves the other to sport in all the license of Independency.

Of the necessity of maintaining such a power of remedial interference you seem not to be sufficiently aware; nor to recollect that our people are interested in it quite as much as we are, and we, indeed, only for them. You seem to think that your Ministers only are liable to offend against the spirit and letter of our discipline; and forget that there is at least equal danger, that societies, or parts of societies, should place themselves in an unconstitutional and disorderly attitude; and that, therefore, the interference of Conference, or of its District Committees, in the affairs of a Circuit, in order to uphold the doctrine or discipline of the body, is a power of interposition in which our people at large, as one body, and the peaceable and sound members of the agitated society in particular, have a right to require of the Conference. The Connexion, by the blessing of God, has been for several years past, in great peace; the discipline of the body being carried generally into effect by the united efforts of Preachers and Leaders. False doctrines have seldom sprung up; immorality has not



been winked at ; useful and pious men have been encouraged to labour in different departments of the church ; and the prevalent desire has been, not to innovate upon our discipline, but to maintain it. But will any thinking man assume, as the basis of an argument on a question of government, that this will always be the case in all the societies ? There have been occasional exceptions of a serious kind already, although the days of primitive simplicity and piety are far from having passed away ; and cases of this kind must be expected to occur by every one who considers that we, like others, are a part of "the church in the wilderness ;" and that we have no promise of exemption from the assaults of the subtlety and malice of the devil, and the corruptness of our unsanctified nature. But you appear to think that no evil can spring up in a particular society which that society itself cannot remedy. Certainly, so long as the majority of its officers and members remain sound in our doctrines, attached to our institutions, and spiritual in their habits, this will be the case ; and the regulations of 1797 suppose this. Then there needs no interposition, but that of the Ministers and officers of a society itself ; and it is because the majority in most of our societies have remained faithful, and the persons requiring the exercise of discipline, in most cases, have been few in number, that you have seldom heard of any interference with the Circuits by the Districts or the Conference. Still there have been a sufficient number of cases to show how necessary and beneficial such a power of interposition is ; and had there been none at all, since "it must needs be that offences will come," are you acting considerately to lend yourselves to advocate a principle which, in cases not to be remedied without external interposition, would shut out the right of such an interference by a new law, or by a new and forced interpretation of an old one ? Some of our societies, with their Leaders and Local Preachers, have, in times past, been infected with Arianism, Socinianism, and Universalism ; others have been disposed to wink at certain forms of Sabbath-breaking, at smuggling, at other immoralities ; others have, by the influence and mischievous agency of a few, been rendered in part politically

disloyal ; others have been inducted into views of church government opposed to the first principles of that under which we have voluntarily chosen to live, and, instead of peaceably withdrawing, have only endeavoured to promote tumult and strife. Now, where the minority is small, and the leading parties uninfluential, the sound majority may deal with such cases ; but what is to be done when the minority is formidable, or when the majority are infected ? Suppose that, in your own respectable society, the majority of Local Preachers and Leaders were to imbibe and teach false doctrines ;—and if the primitive churches fell by this means, what security have you against this trial of your faith ?—or suppose them to become the advocates of a lax discipline ; or to embrace Independent notions of church government ; or factiously to resist the enforcement of those very Rules of the body which you yourselves at present hold sacred ;—all which are possible cases ;—how, then, would the doctrine of the inviolability of your “local jurisdictions,” which you have been taught, affect you ? In an Independent church, we have seen what the result would be. The only remedy for the minority would be submission to evil, or expulsion from their place of worship,—a result which frequently takes place. This would be your case, too, if the doctrine of inviolable local jurisdiction were established in its complete form ; for it must, when perfected, extend to your chapels also,—a point at which many have aimed, as well knowing its bearing. But the constitution under which you now are placed provides your remedy ; the chapels are secured to the use of those who love the doctrines which only can be preached in them ; and the sound minority, by the interference of the authority to which they have now a right to appeal, can be defended against a fallen or a misled majority, on whom the inconvenience of separation from the body alone would fall, as is just. Your principle of local jurisdiction would protect, in such a case, none but the forward, corrupt, and unruly ; the system, as now established, is hostile only to the guilty, protective only to the innocent.

But you perhaps ask, “Allowing that the inherent rights of the ministry are not to be infringed upon, what is our

remedy, in case any Minister should set at nought the guards which our present constitution has placed upon their exercise, in cases where no faction, no inclination to erroneous doctrine, no laxity of feeling as to discipline, can be charged upon the Local Preachers or Leaders ?” The very Rules of 1795 and 1797, on which you attempt to put an hitherto-unknown construction, direct you ; and as you are by them empowered to accuse the offender before a District-Meeting, and finally before the Conference, you must perceive that those very Rules to which you have appealed do not in the least infringe upon the original power of the Conference as the body to which, as vested with the common government of the whole Connexion, the appeal must be made. Yet even in the case of a Preacher being in fault, do you not see how, by shutting out the right of the Conference to interfere, your doctrine of local jurisdiction might possibly fetter you ? A Preacher might act in this heady and tyrannous manner, and yet take the majority of Leaders with him ; and if your Leaders’ Meeting be a jurisdiction not to be interfered with in so extreme a case, where, then, would be the remedy of the injured minority ? By this, and many other instances which might be supposed, you may be convinced that the power of the Conference is not for itself, but for the people at large ; so long as they hold the doctrines, and remain attached to the discipline, to which they now profess their preference.

You may indeed say, that “ the Conference itself may fall into the very evils to which you have supposed a particular society to be liable.” This I grant : I know of nothing human which may not be corrupted, and of no human guards which can effectually prevent this, independent of the special blessing of God. This, however, is the advantage of our existing in the church form of a Connexion, and not as Independents, that great bodies are less liable to change than smaller ones ; and that a body, composed as ours is, has within itself more internal checks and counteractions than that particular Independency which your Resolutions would set up. A Connexion, too, like ours, commenced and matured whilst the spirit of piety and zeal is in activity in every part, necessarily

makes the best provision which anxious care and prudent foresight, under that divine guidance which it seeks, and of which it has the promise, can devise, against corruptions both of doctrine, discipline, and practice. Such provisions we have ; and so far have they exerted a conservatory influence, that we may confidently appeal to the people, whether at any former time the Conference was more distinguished for character, for pastoral care, for attachment to our original doctrines, and for the efficiency of discipline, both as to itself and its enforcement through the Preachers in the societies. It is only for the supposed love of power that we have been charged by the modest part of our recent adversaries ; and it is scarcely more than in this respect that you have echoed their sentiments. If this love of power, however, do exist, it is manifestly confined to the Conference in its collective capacity, and does not show itself in its protection of any who may have employed it unwarrantably in their Circuits. You have no complaint of this kind, nor can you, I believe, fix upon a clear instance which has not been treated by the Conference according to its deserts ; for the Rules of 1795 and 1797, in their fair and consuetudinary interpretation, are always considered by the Conference as the final rule of decision. Undoubtedly, both Preachers' and Leaders' Meetings, too, are often accused of being arbitrary ; which may be easily accounted for. Not a few of our members, and even of those holding office, are very imperfectly acquainted, through their own neglect, with our real system of government, and, indeed, with the just principles of church government in general. Some, also, come among us with views which, from education and association, are favourable to Independency ; and others are often misled by the plausible generalities of the disaffected. To such persons the steady maintenance of our own principles will often appear arbitrary ; partly, because they are restrained by them ; and partly, from their want of information. But the fact of arbitrary government is not proved by their allegations ; and the case is to be decided by those who have known us best and longest : And from them no complaints, as to the ordinary administration of our discipline, have been heard.

Of the power exercised by the Conference collectively, you, however, have complained in a case to which I will briefly advert. It is the sanctioning, by the Conference, of the proceedings of the Special District-Meeting held at Leeds last year on the disputes in that society. Into the particulars of that case it is not necessary to enter ; since with you the main question is said to be a constitutional one ; and in your Address and Resolutions you go into general principles, and except mainly to the interference of the Conference or of a District-Meeting in the “ local affairs ” of any Circuit, as contrary to the “ compact of 1797 ; ” when that power of interference, you have been taught to believe, and have been much too hasty to affirm, was given up. When you dwell upon the case of a Special District-Meeting interfering to take cognizance of proceedings on the part of Leaders, Stewards, and Local Preachers at Leeds, and from that take occasion to exclaim against all such interferences with the “ local affairs ” of a Circuit, did you, my brethren, intend to exclaim against all such interferences of every kind in the affairs of Circuits. I ask you the question, because, in the Rules of Pacification and the Regulations of 1797, to which you so often refer, you must have seen, if you carefully read those documents yourselves, (which I doubt,) and did not implicitly follow some unfaithful guide, (which I fear,) that the Plan of Pacification gives to a majority of the Trustees, or to the majority of the Stewards and Leaders of any society, the power of calling such a Special Meeting of the District, in order to try an Preacher appointed for the Circuit, on charges of immorality, deficient abilities, or violation of rule ; of which Meeting the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders are to be members ; so that if the charges are considered to be proved by the majority of that Meeting, he may be removed from the Circuit. This was a large concession to the people, to enable you to free yourselves from an improper or imprudent Minister in the intervals of Conference ; which you could not, in many cases otherwise have done. Did you, then, intend to renounce this privilege in your zeal against Special District-Meetings ? If you did, this is in proof that you must have aimed, not at the

preservation of Methodism, as settled in 1795 and 1797, but at some quite new system, substantially, for instance, that of the Independents ; for you never could intend to give up this protection to yourselves without some substitute for it, which would have involved greater projects of change than perhaps you were aware of, but which were not unthought of by those who penned your Address and Resolutions. If, however, you did not intend to renounce this privilege, you did not intend to denounce all Special District-Meetings, and all interferences with the local affairs of a Circuit ; you would keep the privilege of using Special District-Meetings to try the cases of Preachers, and to remove them ; and you disclaim them only when they are called to repress faction and disorder among the people. Brethren, is this fair dealing ? In the interval of Conference, a Preacher shall be held liable to be removed by a Special District-Meeting ; but no Leader, no Local Preacher, shall be interfered with in any manner, even when the “ local jurisdiction,” as you term it, is factiously interrupted in the exercise of its functions. You claim liberty for yourselves ; but, I pray you, on whom do you put the yoke ? Again : You have been instructed to argue, from the Minutes of 1797, against the interposition of the Conference, or of any Special District-Meeting, first, in the “ local affairs ” of a Circuit generally, and, secondly, in the trial of its officers ; and the inference you wish to impress upon those among whom you circulate your Address and Resolutions, is, that this is an innovation upon a solemn “ compact,” recently and for the first time sanctioned, and which, as an instance of arbitrary power in the Conference, is to be resisted by all the friends of real Methodism.

I take, then, first, your denial of a constitutional right of interference with the local affairs of Circuits in any case, by the Conference or a District-Meeting ; and what shall we say to the sagacity or fairness of your adviser and interpreter in this matter, or to your incaution in not examining for yourselves, when the very same Minutes of 1797, to which you appeal, give to the President of the Conference the “ right, when written to by any who are concerned, to visit any Cir-

cuit, and to inquire into their affairs with respect to Methodism, and, in union with the District Committee, redress any grievance?" Here is another instance of power given, not to Preachers only, but to "any who are concerned," to call upon the President for the time being to unite with a District Committee to redress any grievances which may have arisen in a Circuit, and, consequently, to interfere with its "local concerns;" and upon this very rule I, when in that office, had a long journey imposed upon me, upon a call, not from the Preachers of a Circuit, but from men who now most heartily take part with you and with the dissentients at Leeds. They had not then discovered, that a Circuit had an inviolable Independency within itself; nor were the dissentients at Leeds more successful, who never objected to the Special District-Meeting held there on this ground until it was suggested by your Address. This great discovery was first made to you; and I am truly sorry that you should have entertained so absurd a novelty with so much deference.

But this is not all: The very same Minutes of 1797, to which you appeal as the ground for your denying the right of the Conference, or a District-Meeting, to interfere in the "local affairs" of a Circuit, contain two other provisions for interference with Circuits, by external influence and authority and could these Minutes, then, have been under your eye, when you consented to put your names to the Resolutions you have circulated? The first is that which empowers a Chairman, in cases which, in his judgment, cannot be settled in the ordinary District-Meeting, to increase the "power" of a District, by summoning three of the nearest Superintendents to be incorporated with the District Committee, "who shall have equal authority to vote, and settle every thing till the Conference." Here, then, in these very Minutes which you contend for, as containing the constitution of the body, is another provision for a Special District-Meeting, to take cognizance of all extraordinary cases which are supposed, in the judgment of the Chairman, to be of so great difficulty as not to be "settled in the ordinary District-Meeting," and to settle all such extraordinary cases, "until the Conference;" to whom the fina

appeal is to be made ; and who, by this constitutional document, as you yourselves confess it to be, is thus recognised as the body in which the common government of the Connexion is invested. Your reasoning on the powers of this District-Meeting will be afterwards noticed.

The second is, that “ the Conference recommends it to the Superintendents of the Circuits to invite, on all important occasions, the Chairman of their respective Districts to be present at their Quarterly Meetings ; ” and thus to interfere officially, by advice and influence, in the “ local affairs ” of Circuits. Now, this you call “ the constitution of 1797,” which you say in your Resolutions it is the object of your Address to “ maintain.” But you blow hot and cold in this matter ; for instead of maintaining this constitution, you reject every thing in it which does not please you, and you set up a principle in direct opposition, not to its spirit only, but to its very letter, by denying all power or authority in the Methodist Conference, or in any District-Meeting, to interfere in the “ local affairs ” of Circuits : Nay, you resolve, in the very teeth of the last “ constitutional ” regulation, to forbid any Preacher, the Chairman of a District therefore not excepted, “ from attending any of your local meetings ” without special leave of such meeting, and without a positive engagement on the part of every Preacher to withdraw immediately on being requested to do so by any member of the meeting ! ” Is it possible that you should not see, that, having been deluded by sophistical reasoning on one part of that constitution, you have set yourselves in direct opposition to another ; that instead of pleading for the whole constitution, which you affect to applaud, you clamour for one part of it only, and will have even that in your own construction of its meaning ? The plea of “ maintaining ” Methodism is a poor disguise which has been assumed by some designing men, in order to beguile you ; and you have followed far too implicitly their artful leadings, instead of your own good judgment. If you really wish constitutional Methodism, here it is, in the Minutes of 1795 and 1797 ; but you spurn it, and yet say you wish to maintain Methodism ! I fear that those



who advised you care nothing for Methodism, and for the constitution of 1797; and the way in which they have drawn up your Resolutions makes this but too manifest; but it would have been much more honest in them to have said "We want a new constitution for Methodism;" which is the fact. Then, indeed, the discussion would have assumed an open and honourable form. But they knew that you could not be brought to this, and they "took you by guile." How, my brethren, could you suffer yourselves to be thus played upon, and that by an artifice which you must have so soon detected, had you suffered yourselves to examine the subject?

You have placed yourselves, indeed, in an unpleasant position before the Connexion, by thus claiming "the constitution of 1797," when you openly and expressly reject several parts of that constitution, as expressed in the Minutes of that year in so many distinct provisions, not to be misunderstood. But some of you, perhaps, may say, perceiving the difficulty in which you have placed yourselves, that, by denying the interference of the Conference, or of a District-Meeting, you mean only an interference to try "local officers." I rather think you have been artfully caught by this, and were thus led much farther than many of you intended. But what have you said and signed in your seventh Resolution? You there, first deny universally, and without any exception, the right of Conference-interference in the "local affairs" of this Circuit and then more particularly, secondly, its interference to try your officers; for your words are, "We utterly deny a right, power, or authority, either in the Methodist Conference or in any District-Meeting, to interfere in the local affairs of this Circuit, or to try, suspend, or expel any local officer or member of society." Thus you deny the interference, first in any case, and then specially in a particular case mentioned. In denying the first I have already shown you that you renounce the first principles of Methodism, and substantially set up the Independent form of church government, and also directly reject that very constitution of 1797 to which you appeal. I think, if you hear me with the same candour as

friendly feeling with which I address you, I can show you that you are equally unconstitutional on the second point.

You deny, then, the right, power, or authority of the Conference, or of a District Committee appointed by it, and responsible to it, "to try, suspend, or expel any local officer or member of society." What do you mean by this? Did you ever know your officers or members tried, suspended, or expelled by the Conference, by a District-Meeting, or even by a Superintendent, since 1797, on his own authority? You never did. Since the last Conference you may have had trials, suspensions, and expulsions. Have they not then all proceeded according to the rules of 1797? Nothing new has occurred among you. You cannot, therefore, mean that the Conference has set up a claim to displace your ordinary tribunals in the ordinary course of things. Nay, even in the extraordinary circumstances of the Leeds case, no man was tried by the District-Meeting, but by the Meeting to which, as Local Preacher or Leader, he belonged. Seeing then all ordinary cases are out of the question, you must mean to deny that in no extraordinary case of any kind, the Conference or a District-Meeting has any right or power "to try, suspend, or exclude any local officer or member." You deny this universally. You deny it, therefore, in all cases where the local officer or member might be, in every sense, worthy of exclusion, as well as where he might not be so worthy. Let us then take such a case; a case of immorality, a case of false doctrine, a case of notorious insubordination to the Rules of the body, even to those Rules which you still acknowledge to be binding. It is clear that if the local tribunals did their duty, the offender would be admonished or expelled in the ordinary way, and no interference of Conference or of a District be required. This interference would not, therefore, take place. It could only be in a case in which the Circuit tribunals did not do their duty, that the interference would be necessary. This failure of duty might be from criminal neglect; or from the accused being supported by a faction of which the Leaders' or Local Preachers' Meeting might be afraid; or from his having a party in those meetings, and that party the majority. These circum-

stances would constitute an extraordinary case ; and you deny that in such an extraordinary state of things any interference ought to take place. This is the position to be examined ; and the first question which arises, is, “ What then would be the condition of such a society ? ” It would be left to the privilege of its own “ local jurisdiction,” it is true ; but immorality, false doctrine, or faction would ride triumphant over it, and leave it a dead and corrupt branch hanging upon the common stock ; and yet defended by this principle of yours from all pruning, or propping, or other means of restoration. What advantage then would a society derive from its union with a Connexion, and from the additional security which such a form of ecclesiastical existence affords, above that of mere Independency ? Clearly none ; for your principle throws that wholly away. The next question is, “ What, in this case, would be the condition of the Preacher, supposing him to be a conscientious man ? ” and you would not the more respect us if we made the prevalent opinion of a society, in such a case, the rule of our consciences, and reduced ourselves to the level of hirelings and time-servers. He would see, in the case supposed, the purity of the church polluted, and the table of the Lord profaned, or destructive errors disseminated, or faction and misrule triumphant, without any power to avail himself of the counsel and influence of his brethren to redress the grievance. The third question is, “ What would be the state of the remaining sound and religious part of the society ? ” for the question is not one in which we, as Preachers, alone are concerned. It was not so at Leeds, although you appear to have thought it proper to omit this consideration. A large portion of the society there was to be protected in the peaceable enjoyment of their rights, and in their desire to walk by the Rules of the body ; and they demanded protection. In the very possible case I have supposed, you yourselves might be the peaceable, well-affected, and faithful minority, over whose “ local jurisdictions,” fear, or faction, or corrupt doctrines, or laxity of discipline, might exercise a paralyzing influence. What then, upon your own principle, would be your condition ? You would have no remedy at all. You reject, in

this case, the advantages of belonging to a Connexion ; you bar up every avenue to the interposition of counsel and authority, and leave yourselves no resource but to remain in fellowship with the corrupt, the factious, and those who will no longer bear “sound doctrine ;” or to abandon your chapels and the body, and seek relief in some more efficient system than that which has no power to coerce the bad, and to protect the good. In vain would you have connected yourselves with us ; for we could not come in to your help, any more than to the help of a church professedly and really Independent.

I have, indeed, supposed a case in which the accused persons are really and obviously culpable, and merit the exercise of discipline ; for as you have excluded the interference of the Conference and of its Committees in all cases, I have a right to try your principle upon such an instance ; and this is, I hope, sufficient to show you its mischievous, and, so long as you profess to be a part of a Connexion, its absurd, character. You may, indeed, suppose a case in which the Conference might interfere against an officer or officers, excellent in character, peaceable in conduct, sound in doctrine, and willing to walk themselves, and to teach others to walk, by the received and established Rules of the body : But this I will say,—you never knew such a case ; that the Conference, which exists only by its hold on the public opinion of the body, could not attempt so flagrant an injustice ; that unless the Preachers were to become generally corrupt and bad men, they could feel no inclination or even motive to attempt it ; and that, unless a part of the people had become as corrupt as themselves, they could find no support in so doing. If the Leeds case were quite so clear an instance of this as you have been taught to think it, the great body of that society, comprising its most intelligent and charactered members, could not have given to the Special District-Meeting, and to the Conference, its support and thanks ; and your Address and Resolutions would have had a better reception in our principal societies, and among our most reflecting friends, instead of meeting, as in this intelligent and influential Circuit, a most unequivocal condemnation, from, I believe, every one.

But your principle is not only to be proved unwise and injurious, because it throws down a guard in which you are as much interested as we Preachers, and in which we are only interested for the sake of the body at large, but it is contradicted, like the former more general one, by the very "Constitution of 1797" to which you appeal.

To leave out all considerations of temporal concerns, and the Rule as to new laws, neither of which are now in question, that "Constitution," as far as concession to the people is concerned, consisted chiefly in the "checks" imposed upon the office of Superintendent, who had originally, as transferred from Mr. Wesley, in his own hands, unless he chose to consult others, the sole power of admitting and expelling members, and of appointing and displacing officers. This the Minutes of the Conference of that year will clearly show. These "checks" were placed upon the every-day official acts of the Superintendent; a circumstance which plainly shows that the ordinary course of the exercise and enforcement of discipline was all along understood both by the party making, and by the party receiving, those concessions, in order to settle the questions of government which in that day had arisen. But that in extraordinary cases, in which all law should be trampled under foot, and attempts made to introduce new and foreign principles of government by violence and faction, the Conference should not interfere to remedy, by authority, an otherwise irremediable state of things, is a position which, although much empty effort is used by the writer of your Address, in order to deceive you, and others through you, is most easily refuted: 1. By the fact, that this is a discovery for the first time made by himself. It was never so understood, certainly, by Preachers or people; never urged in any former dispute on constitutional points; never thought of by the Leeds dissentients till they seized it as a new topic of factious declamation from your Address. Acute and discerning minds, sharpened by the eagerness of contention, have been often turned to these regulations without seeing what to them would have been a very agreeable doctrine; and if, therefore, the author of your Address should plume himself upon his sagacity, it may correct his vanity to

be told, that as superior intellects have missed this interpretation, it may be the dream of a weak mind as probably as the discovery of a strong one. Its novelty is, however, fatal to the argument; for a practical principle could never have been kept out of sight for more than thirty years.

2. But it is more particularly refuted by the fact, which appears on the face of those Minutes of Conference themselves, that this kind of interposition by the Conference and the authorities appointed by it, is, in extraordinary cases, expressly provided for in the "Constitution" to which you appeal. There is, for instance, in these very "constitutional" Minutes of 1797, a Rule for the express object of making "our Districts more effective;" and one of the provisions which follows is that I have already adverted to, which empowers the President, "when written to by any concerned," Preachers or people, "to visit any Circuit, and to inquire into their affairs with reference to Methodism;" a very general subject of inquiry; "and, in union with the District Committee, redress any grievance," which must of course include all the evils that may be complained of, and which ordinary means were found inadequate to redress, whether the cause of the evil were a Preacher or a local officer, or the redress required were persuasion, admonition, suspension, or expulsion. This is the first of the regulations found in the Minutes of 1797, under the head, "Miscellaneous." The second makes "the Chairman of the District, in conjunction with his brethren of the Committee," "responsible to the Conference for the execution of the laws, as far as his District is concerned," or extends. This is another large provision against difficult and extraordinary cases. If the laws are executed, the interposing power, of course, lies dormant; if resisted, and the ordinary means fail, then they are to be "executed" upon the responsibility of the District, no matter who are concerned to uphold their violation. The third expressly enlarges the power of the District, in order to that enforcement of the laws mentioned in the preceding regulation, by adding to the "ordinary District-Meeting," in cases, the settlement of which is thought by the Chairman to be above

the power of the District, (cases, therefore, of an extraordinary kind, and expressly distinguished from “ordinary” ones,) three Superintendents not of the District, to be incorporated with it. The Meeting so constituted is “to settle every thing till Conference;” meaning clearly, as being in connexion with the foregoing regulation, every thing which opposes “the execution of the laws;” all disorder, and faction, and evil, which is not, or cannot be, put down by ordinary means. Where, then, is your principle? The “Constitution” provides that no person shall be expelled from society, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders’ Meeting; and expressly tells you that this is “a check upon the Superintendent,” regulating powers which were previously exercised by him without control of the Leaders’ Meeting, and exercised by him in the ordinary course of official duty; but so far from there being a word to shut out the right and authority of the Conference from interposing, in extraordinary emergencies, this same Constitution expressly provides for it!

The Author of your Address strangely confounds ordinary with extraordinary cases; and has misled you, and perhaps himself: Yet still he could not but see that these regulations respecting District-Meetings stood very unluckily in the way of his argument; and he has laboured hard and wearily to pervert their plain, and, it might have been supposed, unmistakable meaning. You have unwittingly adopted the sophistry, obvious as it is to any one who has read our Rules with attention; and I therefore further beg your patience whilst I point it out to you. A more dishonest attempt was never made to impose upon unsuspecting men, happily better employed as you generally have been with the spiritual ends of your union as a religious body, than with questions of policy. In order to prove that in all cases, extraordinary as well as ordinary, Travelling Preachers alone are amenable to District-Meetings and the Conference, he has told you, that Leaders’, Local Preachers,” and Quarterly Meetings were in existence before District-Meetings, even during Mr. Wesley’s life; and then asserts, which it is hard to admit he could do ignorantly, that

“they had always retained in their own hands the inalienable right of the church to try its own members.” Of the more recent regulation, by which the trial of members is appointed to be in the presence of their respective Meetings, I, and all my brethren, I believe, greatly approve ; but no such “right” was ever given to the Meetings before the year 1797 The writer of your Address either knew, or ought to have known, that Mr. Wesley and the Superintendents after him, although they took counsel of others, as wishing only to employ their power righteously, yet had the power, and often exercised it, to admit, expel, and remove from office, without any reference to such Meetings at all. Nay, this power in Superintendents was the point complained of, when what you call “the Constitution” was settled ; as appears from so many plain words, which no one can mistake ; and was the very thing conceded by the Conference to those “local meetings,” for the first time. How disingenuous, then, in the face of so clear a fact, to assert the contrary, in order to bolster up a futile argument ! Equally culpable is the assertion, “that during this period the judicial power of the Conference itself had been limited and confined (according to the eighth article of the Deed of Declaration, 1784, by which Mr. Wesley defined the powers of the Conference) to the trial and expulsion of members of the Conference admitted into Connexion, or received on trial.” Now to “define” is truly understood by your Address-writer to mean, “to limit or confine ;” but in this article of the Deed there is no act of limitation. It is a clause to give power, not to define power : “The Conference shall and may expel, and put out any member thereof,” &c. The clause has nothing, therefore, to do with the question. No one need be told that the Conference never did try Leaders and members before its own bar, but before the Meetings it has appointed for that purpose. There is no discovery here ; the question alone respects its power to interpose in extraordinary cases, to which the clause in the Deed has no reference one way or other, being wholly on another subject. But that the Conference always had that power appears, not only from its having exercised it in former times without any one dreaming that it went beyond its



authority ; from the very nature of its relation to the societies, as vested by common consent with the government of the whole body ; but also from “ the Constitution ” of 1797, where it delegates its own powers to its President, to the Chairmen of Districts, and to the District Committees, to interfere in such cases, and “ execute the laws ; ” to which arrangement of things the Connexion has been cheerfully consenting from that time till now. I admit, therefore, that triad of principles in the seventh page of your Address ; by the magical touch of which their author attempts to turn day into darkness. Certainly, a District can possess no power which the Conference does not possess ; but this power of interference the Conference does possess, did always possess, and proceeds upon in “ that Constitution of 1797,” (which you claim to “ maintain,”) in its directions to District-Meetings. Equally may we admit that Districts are limited in their authority by the express terms of their commission ; but these terms are large enough to meet all such cases ; they are “ to redress any grievance,” “ to execute the laws,” and to “ settle every thing till the Conference.” Your third Rule, also, lies as forcibly against all the reasoning of your Address, as the two former ; for here is no question of doubtful application at all, if “ the laws ” are obstructed.

The great object of the whole of Part I. of your Address is, to show that Special District-Meetings, the constitutional character of which cannot be denied, are confined in their “ jurisdiction ” to accused Preachers only. You are very willing, my friends, it seems, to keep us amenable to these disputed tribunals ; although you disclaim them for yourselves in every case. The reasoning (if bold assertion can be so called) from the primitive rights of Leaders’ and other Meetings, and from the Conference Deed, has been adverted to. What follows as argument from various Minutes of Conference on the subject of District-Meetings, is so absurd, that it would be even amusing, were it not that one cannot but feel deep sorrow, that so many of you should have yielded yourselves, in your haste, to be abused by it. A Minute of 1791 directs the summoning of a District “ on any critical case,” which, accord-

ing to the judgment of the Assistant, merits such an "interference." But you say, "the critical case" intended by the Rule must be "such a case," for instance, as the trial and suspension of a Travelling Preacher; that is, the phrase, "any critical case," must mean the particular case of a Travelling Preacher! Yet there is no restriction in the Rule to the cases of Preachers, no hint of such restriction. Why then "must" it be restricted? To the reasons given, which have already been refuted, you add, it must be one "with which no existing local authority has power to deal;" which is so far right: But you add, "The local authorities have full power to deal with any case affecting local officers and members of society, and therefore it cannot be applied to such cases." True, not to cases where the Superintendent and the local Meetings use that power to settle the matter; for then no "critical case" exists, the law proceeds without obstruction, and all is right. But the very circumstance which generally constitutes a critical case, is that the local authorities have either not the power to deal with it, or refuse to exercise it; and then the Rule applies, whether the case be that in which a Preacher, an officer, or a private member be concerned.

A third specimen of direct perversion in your Address appears on page 9. The Minutes of 1792 make "further regulations" concerning Districts, and give several directions as to their proceedings when any accusations lie against Preachers; and the argument upon this, by the author of your Address, is this truly legitimate one: That because directions respecting the trial of Preachers before District-Meetings are given in these Minutes, therefore none but Preachers are amenable to District-Meetings, and the Conference, of which they are but the Committees. Just as well might we have argued, that because one of these regulations respects the proceedings when Chairmen are to be tried by the District, that none but Chairmen are amenable to that authority. But a dust of words must be raised to hide from you the inanity of the inference. In these Rules, we are therefore told, "the proper jurisdiction of a Special District is recognised." No

doubt of that ; but the object of the Rules was not to show how far its jurisdiction extends, for we have not a word to that purpose. But “the powers also of a Special District are defined.” Not at all ; in the sense of your Address. The object of the Rule was, not to define the powers of Special Districts generally, which your Address assumes ; but to give powers and directions in cases particularly specified, without excluding others. Nor do I assert this without proof ; for I would not follow so bad an example as the writer of your Address. To see that this Minute was neither intended to explain the proper jurisdiction of a District, nor to define its powers, you have only need to turn to your own Address where you quote the question to which the three regulations are a reply : “What further regulations shall be made respecting the management of the Districts ?” The Rules which follow are, therefore, these further regulations : Regulations added to many others before existing ; and to give these “further” regulations was the intention of the Minute, and not certainly to define either the “jurisdictions” or “powers” of Districts generally. The argument from the Minute of 1793 is precisely of the same loose character, only still more absurd. Its regulations respect the calling of a Meeting, not of the District, but of four Preachers out of a District, and direct them how to proceed in the case of an accused Preacher, or of a difference between two Preachers ; but here, also, we are told, that the jurisdiction of Special Districts is expressly (expressly too !) defined, when we have not a word of definition, nor of the limitation of the jurisdiction of such Meetings ! Your Address, then, comes to the Constitution of 1797 ; and here I see another painful specimen of very unworthy misrepresentation. The checks placed upon the Superintendent’s authority are the subject of several of the regulations ; but the object of your Address is to show, that District-Meetings were then stripped of their authority to interfere with any thing local, and were confined, as to their jurisdiction, to Preachers. But if all this was so evident from the Minutes of 1791, 1792, and 1793, on which you before argue, why need you have gone to the Minutes of 1797 for proofs, that

these obnoxious powers were then given up? If you are right in one case, you must be wrong in the other: If they were given up before 1797, they could not be surrendered in 1797; if they were surrendered then, they could not have been given up in the former years. But, my brethren, here again it may be supposed that you did not read the Minutes for yourselves, but implicitly trusted in the fairness of your agent. He has quoted for you the words of the Conference: When speaking of their concessions, they say, "Our District Committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining." But he has quoted them in no very creditable manner; for the "authority" spoken of is not the authority of the Districts in matters of discipline; for the same Minutes make the Districts responsible for "the execution of the laws;" but it is (will you not be surprised at your own simplicity in permitting yourselves to be so misled by another?) their authority in financial matters, and in them only; for the words of Conference, if your agent had fully quoted them, are, "Our District Committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining, but a bare negative in general:" So that, if the authority there spoken of, as given up, were the authority, as you pretend, of interfering with your local discipline, you yourselves acknowledge that the Conference have retained at least "a bare negative" upon your proceedings, which is no small degree of interference. But the Conference had already explained its own meaning in the preceding page, when, summing up the concessions made, they say, "The whole management of our temporal concerns may now truly be said to be invested in the Quarterly Meetings; the District-Meetings having nothing left them, but a negative." To what disgraceful perversions has the writer of the Address committed you!

In the next instance on which the author of your Address tries his skill, he is manifestly perplexed. In cases which, in the judgment of the Chairman, cannot be settled in the ordinary District-Meeting, the "power" of the District is to be increased by the addition of three Superintendents; and the District, thus constituted, is to settle every thing till Con-

ference. This "settling every thing," you tell us, means settling matters of charge and accusation against Preachers only, but allows of no interference with "local jurisdictions." The answer to this is, as before, on the Minute of 1791, if the case be one of the ordinary exercise of discipline, it needs no interfering with; but the case is an extraordinary one, as appears from the face of the Rule; a case which is so extraordinary, indeed, in its aspect, as to be judged above the powers of the ordinary District-Meeting to cope with; a case which it must take up, but a case which it must be strengthened by the counsel, and influence, and votes of those extra Superintendents to deal with. What answer is it then to make to this provision for an extraordinary emergency, to tell us, as you gravely do, that the Conference of 1797 declared, "that the Districts had hardly any authority remaining," when that declaration, as I have shown, respects "temporal affairs?" for what has this to do with the matter?—or that "a check was put upon the Superintendent's authority," by this Conference, when this Rule respects a District, not a Superintendent in the ordinary exercise of his duty?—or that there are no "express terms" which authorize interference with a local jurisdiction, when, whatever the matter of discipline may be, the District is empowered "to settle it by its vote until the Conference?"—or, finally, to crown the whole, that "local jurisdictions" "must" be excluded from the operation of this Rule, because it is your opinion that Special Districts have no powers of interference conferred on them by the whole class of Rules relating to them? This, brethren, is surely not to argue, but to trifle with yourselves and others. Even the slightest glance at the Minutes might have shown you, that such a Rule could not have been made to effect, as you pretend, a mere "change of Preachers" in the intervals of Conference, upon any dispute arising in a Circuit, for which case provision is made in the first of the two Regulations you have inserted in page 12, by simply giving power to the President to sanction that change. The second Regulation you have quoted is wholly distinct from the former, and is, indeed, the third in the Minutes; another coming in between, which

relates to the Chairmen of Districts.\* It is a provision made expressly for cases of a specially "critical" and "extraordinary" nature ; and was manifestly made for no end at all, if it include not, in its general and unrestricted terms, a power to restore and enforce discipline in any Circuit, where the peculiarity of the case renders the interposition of authority necessary and imperative.

I have now, brethren, gone with you into the constitutional question involved ; and I hope I may have proved, to the satisfaction of some of you, at least, that you have dealt very unfairly with the Rules of 1797 ; that those Rules expressly sanction and appoint the holding of Special District-Meetings, in cases where the ordinary discipline is interrupted ; that your principle of the inviolability of local jurisdictions, in such extraordinary cases, is not only unconstitutional, but a renouncing of one of the guards and privileges of protection which that Constitution has provided for the maintenance of our union, our peace, our purity of doctrine and manners, and our discipline ; and that to reject the right of interposition in such cases by the Conference, and the authorities appointed by it, acting under the control of their own discipline and their respect to the judgment of the wise and pious part of the societies, whose connexion with us is purely voluntary, would be, on your part, wilfully to cast away the security which your connexion with the body affords you, and to adopt the simple form of an Independent church, for which I am sure you are not prepared.

In the ordinary course of things you have the full benefit of the restrictions placed upon the exercise of our duties and powers as Ministers, with the right of putting us upon our trial before a Special District, demanded by yourselves, if we violate them. Where no extraordinary defection of faith, practice, and discipline, occurs, (and may you ever be kept from it !) no extraordinary power can be directed against you ;

\* This intermediate Rule is artfully left out by the writer of the Address, for the sake of a dishonourable quirk. He would thus the more plausibly interpret the third of these Regulations by the first : But even this does not serve his turn ; for he is obliged to leave out a part even of the first !

should that take place, the extraordinary power is of a remedial kind, in which you are in as great a degree interested as ourselves. Whenever that is called in, I think, indeed, and so do all my brethren, as far as I know, that the necessity should be evident ; that the ordinary course of discipline should be interfered with as little as possible ; that affectionate counsel, and kind influence, should be the first means employed to remove the evil ; that tenderness should be exercised to the misled, and forgiveness offered to the penitent ; that every such case ought to be specially reported to the Conference, and be there carefully examined and decided upon ; and that its door ought always, as now, to be kept open for respectful appeals from parties aggrieved. We are no advocates for arbitrary dealing ; give us that credit : We cannot have an interest separate from yours. But you are equally bound, with us, to maintain that salutary system of doctrine and discipline which has been committed both to you and to us ; and, give me leave to say, that you owe it, in Christian duty to us, to believe that this is our motive and endeavour, till you have strong evidence of the contrary, in order that the mutual confidence may be established and maintained betwixt Preachers and people, which is essential to the success of our ministry among you. Some men may, indeed, arise among you, and in other places, who may prefer a different form of church government. Their opinions on these points they have a right to hold ; but then, on the other hand, they sin against Christian sincerity, if, under pretence of bringing us back to what is old in Methodism, they covertly endeavour to bring in what is new, and essentially opposed to our bond of union, and then factiously endeavour to disturb our societies by their publications. If they remain with us, holding such opinions, let them remain at peace ; if they wish any thing new, let them propose it as new, and not endeavour to seduce the unwary by false charges of our departure from a discipline, which, it is clear, they either do not understand, or wilfully misrepresent ; that so, by boldly assuming false premises, they may hang upon them plausible and delusive arguments.

You have yourselves been greatly misled by some such characters. They have practised upon your simplicity ; in a heated moment of infirmity they got your sanction to an Address and to Resolutions, which you cannot approve upon reflection, unless, indeed, which I do not believe, you have really adopted the principles of those documents with a full understanding of their import and bearing. I cannot bring myself to think that one third of the persons who signed the Resolutions ever read with the least care the Minutes of Conference, on which the paltry sophistry of the Address is employed. If you have, and can still thus reason, I must, with great reluctance, admit that your judgment has been warped by principles decidedly anti-Methodistical. If you have not, you see the effect of giving way to the spirit of party : You have committed yourselves to unsound reasonings, and to unsound principles ; you have spoken evil of your Ministers ; you have endeavoured to render us suspected in the estimation of our people ; you have been disseminating seeds of strife and mischief ; and if they have not taken root, it has not been owing to you, but to the good sense and pacific disposition of our people ; and for what end ? To uphold, you say, the Constitution of 1797, which, I have proved to you, is precisely such a Constitution as you object to and exclaim against ; and to establish a principle which converts you from Methodists into Independents.

I leave these things to your consideration. Before you publish any thing more upon our “ Constitution,” as you please to term it, be sure you understand it ; and try those who pretend to guide your judgment in those matters before you trust them. Remember that every man you meet has his project for mending matters of government, as every man can tell you of an infallible cure for the tooth-ache. But the oftener you try the experiment, the more doubtful of these pretensions you will become. Good government is the joint result of public virtue and long experience ; both are found in the Connexion to which you belong ; and the result is one which more calls for thankfulness to God, than for suspicions one of another. Whatever may improve our institutions, and



make them more consistent with the original ends of our union, or keep them up vigorously to their leading principles, is matter for brotherly, fair discussion. For which of us does not wish that, as a people, we may be made more useful, united, and holy? But let no man attack the vital principles of the Connexion, whilst he professes attachment to it. Let him not say, "Hail!" and betray it with "a kiss;" and if on any innocent subject of discussion his opinions should not meet with so cordial a reception as he thinks they deserve, and fail of working the same conviction in others as they have wrought in him, let him not think it a highly Christian proceeding to assail his Ministers and his religious associates with calumny and aspersions. Let every one feel that when party spirit is excited in the church, some minds are sure to suffer spiritual loss, and some souls must be endangered; and that, therefore, unfriendly discussions are to be dreaded as fraught with dangers. All these subjects will, I know, be lost upon heady and opinionated men; but, I trust, not upon you. For some of you, I hope, may show as great a readiness to renounce the errors and culpable proceedings into which you have been led, as you have discovered to be led into them. I have not followed your Address into the Leeds case, because if I have shown that you have proceeded to judge of it on false principles, the application of the more correct ones I have endeavoured to set before you will, on the main points at least, present it to you under a different aspect. If you continue to hold opinions which have no countenance in any thing that Methodism ever was, or I believe ever will be, you will continue to form, not only of that, but of all similar cases, a very mis-directed judgment. I have spoken to you with plainness, but with affection; and if you ask why I, a Preacher not in your Circuit, should thus seem to trespass upon your favourite notion of the inviolability of your own "local jurisdiction," I have only to say, that you have gone out of it yourselves; you have gone into the "local jurisdiction" of the Leeds Circuit; and into that of mine also, where you, by the circulation of your papers, have endeavoured, though without any effect, to hold up me

and my brethren to the suspicion of the people among whom we minister, as disposed to tyrannize over them, and to rob them of their true liberty in Christ. Notwithstanding this, I sincerely wish you an entire restoration to a right judgment and a right feeling ; and, as one who has laboured happily among you in time past, shall rejoice to hear of your spiritual prosperity.

I am

Yours affectionately,

RICHARD WATSON.

MANCHESTER,  
*December 29th, 1828.*



# REVIEWS,

PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY IN THE WESLEYAN-  
METHODIST MAGAZINE.



## REVIEWS.

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### REVIEW I.

1. *Observations on the System of Wesleyan Methodism : In a Letter addressed to the Rev. R. Johnson, Superintendent of the Hull Circuit. By Mark Robinson. Pp. 47. 1824.*
2. *Review of Mr. Robinson's Letter on Wesleyan Methodism, in the Christian Guardian for July, 1824.*
3. *An Investigation of Mr. Mark Robinson's Observations on the System of Wesleyan Methodism. By Charles Welch. Pp. 68. 1825.*
4. *An Apology for the System of Wesleyan Methodism ; being a Reply to Mr. Mark Robinson's Observations on the same subject. By Humphry Sandwith. Pp. 84. 1825.*

WE have delayed noticing this controversy, that the pamphlets to which it has given rise might be all before us ; but as scarcely more than a few circulars and personal disputes have succeeded, or been mingled with those placed at the head of this article, and they chiefly of local interest, we take it for granted, that the case is exhausted : And though little more than the partial troubling of the excellent societies of Wesleyan Methodists in the Hull Circuit, happily unused to strife and contention, has been the result ; yet, as the controversy is connected with general considerations of some interest, we have thought it proper to make it the subject of a few remarks. The character, too, of the periodical work mentioned second in the above list, and of the party it represents, is in no small degree implicated ; and because that work has lent itself, not over creditably, whether the intellectual or moral character of a Review be considered, to the promulgation of misrepresentations against a religious body, and has thus carried them into quarters into which the crude pamphlet

of Mr. Robinson had no natural access, we are bound, in justice to ourselves, to administer a little friendly admonition to its conductors.

The history of the first pamphlet in our list may be very briefly given.

The writer, a Local Preacher in Beverley, till lately a part of the Hull Circuit, was for some years the representative of a small secret party, opposed to the opinions and wishes of many leading friends, resident in that Circuit, on the subject of its division from Hull. Unfortunately for him, that party, in these contests, generally kept behind the scene; and, finding him a suitable instrument, employed him to fight their battles, and shoot their arrows. We say, unfortunately for him; because the pamphlet before us bears sufficient marks of the effects produced upon the temper and principles of its author, by the wilful and unsanctified spirit of contest; and of the injury done to a once not unamiable and, when left to himself, a harmless man. From the collisions on this subject, kept up, not with the Preachers so much as with the majority of the intelligent and pious persons of the Circuit, ill feelings appear to have settled themselves in a naturally unyielding mind; vanity, perhaps fed by the same agency which would never openly show itself, attained its share of influence; and the author of the *Observations* at length aspired to be the head of a new sect, to the surprise of his friends; and, we dare say, when the thought came fresh in all its blandishments to his imagination, not less to the surprise of himself.

The mere right of any man to climb, if he can find others to hold the ladder, we shall not dispute. As all religious sects which build themselves out of the world's quarry, if they hold any efficient portion of evangelical truth, must do good; so it would have placed the author of the *Observations* in a respectable light, had he gone forth, with those like-minded with himself, into the neglected neighbourhoods of Beverley, and the villages adjacent, turning men from darkness to light, and from sin to holiness; establishing among them his most favourite system of discipline and government, and offering himself as coadjutor to such of the parochial Clergy as might

set any value upon his services, to assist them in reclaiming the vicious part of their flocks. His sect was, however, to be cut out from a religious body already existing; and when this is the object, when men only attempt to reap that on which they have bestowed no labour, the most honourable means are not always resorted to: It is enough for them, if they can avenge the quarrels of their own vanity and disappointments upon a religious society, pervert the simple, mislead the ignorant, and congregate the factious. That little mischief has been done, in the present case, is not owing to the want of will, but because neither the principles, conduct, nor talent of the small party of whom the author of the *Observations* is but the instrument, could have much influence in a part of the *Connexion*, where the societies are distinguished by their good sense, sobriety, and piety, where Preachers and people had been always greatly united, and where no serious grievances were, in fact, felt to exist. The imaginary evils conjured up in the theorizing head of Mr. Robinson might well create a smile, when religious prosperity and peace were actually enjoyed; and if any portion of the Hull society had been disposed to set out on a voyage of religious discovery, it is not to be presumed, that they would have looked to Beverley for a pilot.

The wreck of all candour, honesty, and truth, produced in weak and heady minds by those wretched disputes,—disputes which originate in no principle, but are either the result of mere exacerbation of feeling, or spring from the aspirations of a restless conceitedness,—is, even when the case is presented in a very limited scale, distressing enough to all who feel how serious a matter it is for the souls of but a few to be endangered by them; but the gravity of the present case is almost irresistibly lightened by the absurdities which have been mingled with it.

The year before Mr. Robinson's *Observations* were published, it appears, from the copy of a circular given in Mr. Welch's pamphlet, that he had wrought himself into what he called a Church Methodist; and had entered into a correspondence with persons in different Circuits, to ascertain their



sentiments, as to an attempt to place Methodism under the control of the Clergy ; which he, simply enough, calls a return to primitive Methodism. With this scheme, having warmed his own imagination, he seems to have attempted the same process upon some of the neighbouring Clergy. One or two of these were warmed, also, into the ardour of hope, and under that influence the *Christian Guardian* was made the vehicle of Mr. Robinson's lucubrations ; and its influence was obtained to the scheme of abridging the power of the Conference, in order to lay hold of the people for the Clergy. This was the avowed object ; but neither Mr. Robinson, nor his clerical reviewer in the *Christian Guardian*, seems ever to have thought of making the very necessary previous inquiry, whether the people might not be quite as impracticable as their Preachers ; and whether, in point of fact, one in ten thousand of them could be found throughout the Connexion, however fond of novelty, to become the subject of this transfer, from the pastoral care of their own Ministers, to that of a firm of Irish seceding Preachers, to be imported for this purpose, and to the Clergy of the *Christian Guardian* party, aided and assisted in their deliberations by Mr. Robinson, and those whom his correspondence might render favourable to this marvellous project. This was rather too low and practical a consideration for the projectors to stoop to ; and Mr. Robinson, and his newly-acquired clerical friends, buoyant with this scheme, appear to have hastened to York in search of the highest ecclesiastical patronage ; to which they are stated to have sought (perhaps obtained) an introduction. Whether questions a little more practical were put to them there, we know not. Nothing, of course, could be more natural ; and when the whole of this imposing measure, for bringing the Methodists of Great Britain into a more perfect union with the Church, was found to be patronized by Mr. Robinson, a Local Preacher of Beverley, the Rev. Mr. Somebody, the reviewer of Mr. Robinson's *Observations* in the *Christian Guardian*, and about fifteen or twenty simple people in Beverley, led along, they knew not whither, by Mr. Robinson's influence ; the project of archiepiscopal patronage

appears to have been rendered hopeless ; and Mr. Robinson was left to push on his enterprise by the help only of its own humble apparatus. So the matter, we believe, rests ; and such is the historical view of the case.

The Christian Guardian, for the reasons above given, demands our chief notice.

This publication represents that part of the evangelical Clergy who have adopted strict Calvinistic notions ; and has lately, on several occasions, turned a somewhat acrid aspect upon the Methodist body. How far the loftiness and bigotry of high Church principles have produced these aberrations from kindly feeling, or in what degree the hostility of high Calvinism, never very remarkable for its meekness, may have contributed to this, it is not for us to determine. We shall take occasion to say, that, as for the whole body of evangelical Clergy, we have unfeigned respect, and see their increase with great satisfaction ; so even towards that portion of them whose sentiments are more immediately represented by the Christian Guardian, we wish to cultivate a Christian affection. We give them honour, as a part of the national Clergy ; we think them worthy of estimation, if not for any thing distinguished in their talents, (for neither as theologians nor as Preachers are they, with a few brilliant exceptions, very highly gifted,) yet for their general piety ; and especially because they have more of the cross to bear in confessing and preaching Christ than falls to the lot of Ministers of other religious denominations. But if any portion of them will stray beyond their functions to asperse others, or hastily to collect the aspersions of every weak man with whom they may have made an accidental acquaintance, without inquiry, and without examination, they must place it to the account of their own folly, and not to our want of charity, if we convict them of the errors, both of principle and of temper, into which they have fallen. They ought, at least, to consult the respectability of the work by which they choose to be represented, and to look to its more careful, and to its more "Christian," management.

What has been the conduct, then, of the Christian Guardian ? From a note in Mr. Welch's Investigation, it

appears, that the review of *Observations on the System of Methodism* was furnished from Mr. Robinson's manuscript; and the whole must, therefore, have been taken on the faith of the clerical reviewer; for the conductors could have no knowledge of the merits of an unpublished pamphlet; and thus, not only the credit of the work, but of the party of Clergymen it represents, was, with notable prudence, on the part of the editor, made to depend on the sense or the folly, the candour or the prejudice, of a single Clergyman. Of Mr. Robinson, the editor and the conductors, we may venture to say, knew nothing; even of his book they knew nothing, when they published their review; but they learned that it was an attempt to promote a division among the Methodists; that it contained an unfavourable representation of their internal system of government, with which, it is clear, they had no acquaintance, and must have felt that they had none; and yet, without having seen the work, they utter their review, and attach themselves to its statements. We ask, whether the respectability of a work so conducted is not entirely blighted, and in what sense it can be a *Christian Guardian*. The part of the conductors of such a publication, had they consulted their own respectability only, would have been to guard against being imposed upon by a reviewing brother, ignorant of the subject on which he wrote; the part of Christian men would have been to ask, Can we who preach and write against schism become abettors of it? And can we publish attacks upon a religious body, without first inquiring whether the alleged facts are true? They hesitated not as to either; and thus confess, that they have no strong objections to "the sin of schism," when it is in their own favour; and no objection to a little religious scandal, if but the Methodists are to be the subjects of it. So much for the conductors of the *Christian Guardian*. Let us now turn to their clerical reviewer.

This writer, in whom, it seems, the *Christian Guardian* reposes so much confidence as to print his review without ever having seen the book reviewed, and to entrust its own intellectual character in his hands, undertook to write and to put

forth extracts from Mr. Robinson's Observations on two subjects,—the alleged departure of the Methodists from the Church of England, and the internal administration of the body. Now, to what sources of information on these subjects does the reviewer resort? Does he enter into the history of Methodism? Does he advert to a single work written by Mr. Wesley, or to a sentence he ever uttered on the subject of his clerical irregularity? Does he give himself the trouble to ascertain whether any reasons were ever put forth by the Conference for yielding to the requests of the societies to have the ordinances administered by their own Preachers? Does he go to the Minutes of the Conference, or any authority acknowledged in the body, as expounding the modern system of Methodism? “Of course,” says the reader, “he does all this, if he ventures an opinion.” The reader is mistaken; the reviewer is quite independent of all toil of this kind. This man of research into the constitution of Methodism has one authority, and one only; and that authority is Mr. Robinson's pamphlet. He has not even that pamphlet in a printed form in his hands, on which he might ask an opinion as to its correctness from any who might have read it; he closets himself with the author; he reads his manuscript, or hears it read, the only reading on the subject of Methodism he seems ever to have indulged in; and on the authority of a manuscript, which, when printed, makes just forty-seven pages, notes, digressions, and personal skirmishes, all included, he comes forth a critic on Methodism, and the oracle of the Christian Guardian. Are we informed, that “the liberty of no small portion of His Majesty's subjects is likely to be affected?” the authority is Mr. Robinson;—that “the power of the Preachers is alarming?” Mr. Robinson is again referred to;—that it was the Preachers who effected the separation from the Church? again we have this same oracle of this qualified reviewer, Mr. Robinson. Thus, in every other point; and just as the author of the Observations himself takes every factious or silly pamphlet, which has ever been written against the Connexion, for undoubted verity; so the reviewer, in his simplicity, makes no appeal beyond Mr. Robinson; and having implicitly sub-

mitted to his tuition on all these points, he gives the result of his rapidly-completed education in Methodistical history and politics to the readers of the *Christian Guardian* ! Should the reviewer say, that he has merely introduced Mr. Robinson's sentiments, this will not serve him ; he has done this with his own approbatory comments. He has had time also to correct his own mistakes, and those of his authority ; and has not done either. It is now twelve months since this review appeared ; since that time the two pamphlets mentioned in the list at the head of this article have appeared, which expose Mr. Robinson's errors, not as to reasoning merely, but as to all the facts noticed most forcibly by the *Christian Guardian* ; and yet he has taken no notice at all of these corrections, nor amended his own blunders by their information. It was not truth then that was sought. If the *Guardian* could devote its pages to an attack on Methodism, it was required from it by justice and honour, that its manifest mistakes should be corrected. To have confessed that it had been misled by its own heat and haste, would have been a confession of criminal incaution in a work affecting any reputation ; but to be silent, spares vanity only, at the expense of character. If it be said, that the columns of the *Christian Guardian* could not be occupied with the explanations of Methodistical parties ; then we ask, Why was the subject introduced into them at all ? This work, it seems, can find room for the gratification of its prejudices,—none for the reparation of its follies.

But, for the manifestation of the large acquaintance which the *Christian Guardian* had on the subject concerning which it put forth its review, we shall enter into a few particulars. The principal object of Mr. Robinson, since his conversion to what he calls Church Methodism, and his renunciation of his former sectarianism, has been to bring over the Methodists to a strict union with the Church, or rather with the parochial Clergy. It was this that brought him within the fraternal hug of his clerical reviewer ; and this which made the *Guardian* so greedy of prey, as to seize upon all that Mr. Robinson and his reviewer could offer, without the least examination of its quality. That part of the subject which was first in the feeling of the

Guardian, we shall place, therefore, first in order of remark ; for it would be ridiculous to suppose, that the conductors of this publication could enter quite so sympathetically into the endangered liberties of the Methodist body as they affect ; or that, indeed, in the way of liberty, and lay interference in spiritual things, they seriously suppose that they have a richer boon to offer, as a motive to induce any portion of the Methodists to place themselves under their pastoral guidance. We should, indeed, be curious to learn, in this negotiation into which the Guardian seems not indisposed to enter for our becoming regular Churchmen, how much even the evangelical Clergy, represented by the Guardian, are disposed to offer, in the way of Christian liberty, who generally would not, or dare not, endure a mere prayer-meeting, where laymen should engage in extemporaneous devotion.

But it is time that we give our readers a specimen of this intelligent critique :—

“Hitherto,” says the Guardian, “the great success of the system has prevented its friends from looking accurately into its defects. But though Methodists will not readily allow that it is deteriorated, yet all must acknowledge that it is materially altered since the death of Mr. Wesley. Were that venerable man to return to the world, and revisit his numerous societies, he would not know his own children ; so far are they departed from those peculiarities which distinguished the Methodism of his day. Much of this change has been produced by the unchecked domination of the Preachers. It was the Preachers’ interest to have service in church hours, to introduce the administration of sacraments, and to do what they could to entail upon Methodism all the evils of sectarianism. They pursued their object ; they deliberated on it in Conference ; they acted on those deliberations in their Circuits ; and by repeated consultations, and continued excitement of the minds of the people, they brought about a remarkable alienation from the Establishment, and a pretty general expression of desire for the administration of the ordinances among themselves.”

On this passage we remark,

1. That “success” is attributed to our “system ;” and the

Guardian neither can, nor is, we suppose, inclined to deny, that this is success in converting men to Christ. Here, then, is a system operating largely and powerfully, by the blessing of God, in diffusing the spirit of religion, and in turning men to God. This is acknowledged ; but what does the Guardian lament ? That we have not looked at its defects. Suppose we acknowledge this, and beg the Guardian to assist us to detect and amend the defects, that we may yet more invigorate this successful system. Will he do us this brotherly service ? Just the contrary. His advice is, not that we amend the defects in “the system,” but that we break up this same system, because of these supposed defects ; which, however, have not prevented its large success in doing good ; and that we get rid of it entirely, by adopting a system which neither ancient nor modern Methodism ever knew or approached to. Such is the wisdom of our adviser. “You have a good system, with some defects ; acknowledge the defects, and renounce the good system altogether.” If there be any weight in this strain of remark, if it be any thing better than party inanity, we might, for an equally good reason, call upon the evangelical Clergy of the Guardian party, to give up their Churchism, and become Wesleyan Methodists.

2. The Guardian, like most others who take the same line of observation, affects, in order to fix the charge of sectarianism upon modern Methodism, to approve of Methodism before “the death of Mr. Wesley ;” and to hold up to reverence the exemplary Church attachments of Mr. Wesley himself. Now, all this is either utter ignorance on the part of such writers, or it is said *ad captandum*. In the present instance we may refer it to total want of acquaintance with the subject ; the whole length and breadth of the reviewer’s reading on Methodism being obviously confined to Mr. Robinson’s pamphlet. The fact is, that the Methodism of old times, and the irregularity of Mr. Wesley, were just as little agreeable to high Churchmen in his day, as modern Methodism is to the same class of men in the present ; and the Methodism of Mr. Wesley’s time would be but little more agreeable to the party of the Christian Guardian, than the form which it has now

assumed. A great part of Mr. Wesley's societies could not be induced, by even his authority, to take the Lord's supper from the hands of worldly or wicked Clergymen,—the character, in that day, as the Guardian will acknowledge, of great numbers of the national Clergy ; Mr. Wesley suffered not the ecclesiastical authorities to interfere with the internal management of his societies ; he would not suffer them to be controlled by any parochial Clergyman in the three kingdoms ; he gave the Lord's supper himself in unconsecrated chapels, and employed Clergymen to do this ; he gave up episcopal ordination, as understood by high Churchmen, and, in pursuance of his belief in the validity of Presbyterian ordination, he ordained Preachers to give the sacraments ; so that, according to strict Church notions, he sanctioned what some would call lay administration. Did the Guardian know these facts ? If so, what becomes of the comparison between Methodism in Mr. Wesley's time, and Methodism after his death ? On what ground is Mr. Wesley's authority in favour of regular Churchmanship adduced ? And would the Guardian thank Mr. Robinson, or any other man, were it possible to bring back such "primitive Methodism" as this ? But this is the effect of writing when reading was rather necessary, and when the book is a fitter instrument than the pen.

3. The principal topic of complaint in the passage we have quoted is, the administration of the sacraments to the Methodist societies ; who are represented as having been brought over, and in a sort compelled, to submit to this, chiefly by "the unchecked domination" and exertions of the Preachers. What did the reviewer and the conductors of the Guardian know of the history of those times, that they should hazard these confident assertions ? And being utterly ignorant of the facts of the case, and conscious as they must be that they had never given themselves any pains to understand them, were they totally regardless of their character, when they indulged in misrepresentations so clumsy, and so easily detected ?

This entire revolution, as they choose to represent it, in the system of Methodism, was, as we have just seen, com-



menced by Mr. Wesley himself ; and it cannot, therefore, be true, that it was effected by the exclusive influence of the Preachers after his death. The principles on which it rested were introduced by him ; the practice itself was commenced ; and it was only restrained by his unwillingness to extend change beyond what he conceived to be the absolute necessity of the case. This we do not, like the Guardian, content ourselves with saying ; but give the proofs in matters of historical fact. The great principle of the validity of Presbyterian ordination, which is the ordination of the Conference, was established by Mr. Wesley, who himself acted upon this principle, by giving ordination ; and thus he renounced entirely the notion of Bishops and Presbyters being distinct orders. He admitted, also, the principle of meeting conscientious scruples in opposition to his own general practical rule, by administering the Lord's supper, and authorizing it to be administered, in his own chapels ; and in empowering those Preachers who were ordained by him, to administer the sacraments in Scotland and the United States ; and thus gave up the absoluteness of his practical regulation, as well as renounced the high Church dogma, that diocesan Episcopacy is the only legitimate form of church government. No new principle, we may therefore inform the Guardian, who so much needs instruction, was introduced into the body after the death of Mr. Wesley, in these respects ; and as to the practice, that was, in fact, but extended, not commenced.

4. The representation, that this change was the act chiefly of the Preachers is also untrue.

That the people, in different places, felt some uneasiness on this account, long before Mr. Wesley's death, would have been known to the reviewer, had he known any thing at all on the subject of our history ; because he would have known, that Mr. Wesley, to meet it, took many steps, quite irregular in a strict Churchman. There was a strong, and, in many instances, an unconquerable, conscientious scruple against receiving the Lord's supper from unenlightened and irreligious Clergymen. Provision was made for that, in part, by Mr. Wesley ; but it was not commensurate with the case. The consequence was,

that the Lord's supper was greatly neglected, except in the few places where the Clergy were pious ; and but for Mr. Wesley's advancing years, the claims of the societies would have become clamorous. There was, besides this, what the Guardian has either no perception of, or was unwilling to suppose possible, a warm affection among the societies for those who ministered to them in the Lord, and a general desire to have the ordinances from them. Nor from the moment that Mr. Wesley advocated the validity of the ordination of Presbyters, and exercised it, could any principle but that of expediency be opposed to this natural wish. The question was, therefore, through all the latter years of Mr. Wesley's life, one of expediency, and of expediency only ; the principle was given up by himself.

The open and obvious proof of the general sentiment of the body on this subject, after Mr. Wesley's death, is, that exceedingly few persons separated from the body when the Lord's supper, from their own Preachers, was allowed to such societies as chose to petition for it. It was the societies, not the Preachers exclusively, or even chiefly, as the Guardian would have it understood, who led on the change ; and the Preachers who did advocate it only represented the societies ; and in their name, and by their wish, pleaded the rights of their consciences, and the evils of obliging them either to communicate with profane men or with Dissenting congregations, or often with Arians and Socinians, or to neglect the solemn command of their Lord. The rapid manner in which the dispute on this point, which was excited by a very small minority, subsided, and the agreement of the opposing party themselves, generally, in the Plan of Pacification, are sufficiently in proof of the prevalent sentiment of the members.

Such are the facts we set in opposition to the hasty assertions of the Guardian. But what if the Preachers generally had taken a more active part in this question ? We bring the Guardian, and the party it represents, to an issue upon that point ; and will see what there is in this high-toned ecclesiastical feeling, which so often, and so querulously, vents itself among high Churchmen.

They assume that “a remarkable alienation” was brought about from the Establishment. This we deny. The great body of the Methodists were not, in any true sense, of the Establishment. For, first, all who had been educated among the Dissenters, all the Presbyterians of Scotland and Ireland, and the converts from the Catholics, must be struck off; and then, more than all the rest, those who had lived in the neglect of all religious ordinances, and according to the course of this world, who seldom attended the Church, and never had communion with her in the sacrament. Few, then, will be left who were of such serious and considerate habits as to consider themselves properly members of the Church of England; and for these that Church, in that day, afforded scarcely any pastoral care; and after all, they were and still are at liberty to remain her members, and frequent her communion. There never was any compulsion, or even influence, used against this. Where, then, is the fact of this “remarkable alienation” from the Church? We know, indeed, that the high Church clergy claim, as members of the Church of England, those who never communicate with her, those who never attend her ordinances, all those who are openly irreligious, provided they do not actually join themselves to other communities. But if the great body of the Methodist societies were collected from these, and brought, in consequence, under religious influence, though they were not to be found in the fold of the Church, yet men who preach Christ out “of love,” not “out of contention,” would rejoice in this advancement of the cause of the common Christianity; and wise men would see, that by the general effect produced upon society, the Church of England was and continues to be benefited. For it is no difficult point to prove that, for her better state and higher character, the Church is very greatly indebted to Methodism. But we deny, *in toto*, the doctrine, that the Church has any exclusive claim to the body of ignorant and immoral people in the country; to what Dr. Chalmers calls, “the outfield population;” to those who do not voluntarily communicate with her. She has her legal rights in their tithes and offerings, of which we have no wish that she should be deprived in any degree; but she has none

exclusively in their souls. Originally it was different. There was a spiritual as well as a pecuniary property vested with the Clergyman in his parishioners. They might be fined for not attending his ministry; they were prevented from attending any other; they were compelled to follow his guidance, and his only. But all this has passed away by the laws of religious liberty, which have been made parts of the constitution of the country. The population is thrown open to the Ministers of all protected sects; and all or any may labour among them, in any parish, to make them wiser and better; may build them up into Christian societies, and give to them all the ordinances of Christian churches, according to their own interpretation of Scripture; and that as legally, as much by the laws of the country, as the parish Clergyman performs his duties,—the one having the same high sanction as the other. All these laments over the alienation of this class of people from the Church, who in no moral or modern sense can be said ever to have belonged to it,—who were of the world, and in the world, and of and in nothing else,—are the result of traditional language and traditional feeling, deduced from ages when intolerance and an exclusive bigotry prevailed, and when Protestantism had not defecated itself.

But to the main point of complaint. Let it be supposed that the great majority of those societies, thus gathered to Christ out of “the outfield population,” did not urge the Preachers to give them all the privileges of a Christian church, (whereas the reverse of this was the fact,) but that the Preachers generally urged this upon them, (which we admit only for the argument’s sake,) what reason of complaint has the Christian Guardian, and the Clergy it represents, on this account? The number of enlightened and pious Clergy was few in that day, the lives of many not very correct, the hostility of the majority very great, the abusive sermons preached very numerous. The consequence of this was, a neglect of an imperative ordinance. Now, we think that it was the duty of the Ministers of a people so circumstanced to provide for their spiritual necessities; at the same time leaving those who chose to hold communion with the Church at perfect liberty to follow the

dictates of their own consciences. We doubt not but that if the Clergy, represented by the Christian Guardian, had been restrained by circumstances of expediency from exercising the full powers of their ministry, until their congregations had been left without any other provision for the administration of the ordinances, or any but that to which they conscientiously objected, as holding communion at the Lord's table with worldly and immoral men, they would very seriously have felt their responsibility in this matter, and have very anxiously examined how far the reason of expediency would hold good, and when and under what circumstances it ought to terminate. But here we suspect that the Guardian, secretly at least, replies, "We are authorized to administer the sacraments;" intimating that they only are authorized. But we may surely look an exclusive claim, when only insinuated, in the face, and venture to ask those who wrap themselves up so complacently in episcopal dignity and authority, Why might not the Preachers of the Wesleyan body say of the Clergy, "Are they Ministers of Christ? So are we." That they are so by the laws of their country, is clear from their being equally protected in the exercise of all the functions of the ministry with the Clergy themselves. That they are so scripturally, is a point on which they will not shun the Guardian or any of its party, should they wish to moot it. What gives the Clergy their authority to administer the word of God and sacraments, but their ordination? What gives to Dissenting Ministers and those of the Church of Scotland their authority? Their ordination. What gives to Methodist Preachers their authority to administer? Their ordination. Ordination takes place in all these cases; that is, the separation of men from secular concerns, upon profession of a call from God the Holy Ghost, and after a good report from the churches, by the recognition of men already in the ministry. This is ordination, in the scriptural and theological sense of the word, in all churches. When the matter is substantially the same, in what then do the cases differ? They differ in circumstances. The Church of England, adopting the principle, that Bishops and Presbyters are distinct orders, and that ordination can only issue from

a Bishop, admits episcopal ordination, and that only. The Presbyterians reject this notion of Episcopacy, and ordain “by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.” The Independents, not acknowledging the connexion and dependence implied in the Presbyterian scheme, ordain by the ministry of a few Ministers, voluntarily assembled to perform this office; and thus the practice, as to circumstances, differs among different bodies. The ordination or appointment of Preachers among us more nearly assimilates to the Presbyterian form than any other. But what do the high Ecclesiastics say to all this? They deny that any ordination is valid but episcopal ordination; and in this they assimilate to the Romish Church. We give them their opinion with all its benefits; they may have never read, or not have been convinced by, the numerous works which have been published on this question. They may not have thought that it is a point on which wise and good men may differ from them, though they are able to furnish no single explicit scriptural testimony in their favour, and though the moderate Clergy of their own Church will acknowledge that it is a point on which a difference of opinion and practice may conscientiously exist among the different denominations. It is a point, indeed, on which a difference of opinion existed, in former days, among the highest dignitaries of their own Church; some of whom denied the necessity of re-ordaining those Ministers that had previously received Presbyterian ordination. We leave to ecclesiastical ultras all their exclusive notions, and the feelings which result from them; but if they deny the validity of the ordination of Ministers, as practised among the Methodists, on the same principle they deny it to the Dissenting churches; they take it away from the Church of Scotland, and from all non-episcopal churches throughout the world. In this company we can have no objection to be ranked; and are quite satisfied that whether the inward moving of the Holy Ghost, or the theological talent, or the ministerial usefulness, or the scriptural recognition and appointment, be considered, all the regular Methodist Preachers have not only as legal an authority, but one as fully scriptural, as the Clergy of the Christian

Guardian party, to discharge all the functions of **Ministers of Christ** to their societies and to the world.

If the Preachers, then, had been the causes of the change complained of in the above extract, to religious men, capable of entering into cases of conscience, had they taken the least trouble to examine the subject, cogent and even praiseworthy motives might have suggested themselves as the reason of their conduct. But though the Guardian could not stoop to inquire, it could stoop to insinuate that the Preachers consulted their influence and their interest. As to the first, the reviewer contradicts himself; for if the Preachers had so much influence as to bring over the reluctant societies to renounce communion with the Church, they could scarcely feel the want of greater influence; that which is ascribed to them being dominant and conquering. And as for interest, perhaps the Guardian does not know that the Preachers had no additional stipend for administering the Lord's supper, and that they require no fees on baptism.

We may dismiss this part of the subject, brought before us by the Christian Guardian's review, by the general observation, that no project of a weak man was ever more obviously absurd, than to bring the Methodists into that kind of relation to the Church which is proposed by the author of the Observations; which, with so deficient an acquaintance both with the Church of England and the Methodists, is so eagerly caught at by the review in the Guardian; and to which some degree of individual clerical patronage, we believe, was at first rather zealously extended. That the project should die as soon as it was born, every reflecting man expected, notwithstanding the significant hints of its clerical patrons, and the whispered probable results of "a pilgrimage to York," if not "to Canterbury." Methodism exists in a friendly relation with the Establishment; it does not spread through the community those theoretic principles of Dissent which level themselves directly against her; it does not busy itself in holding up to scorn and ridicule the abuses and evils of the national Church: In all its official writings and sanctioned publications, though often called to defend itself, as in the present instance, against intemperate

Clergymen, it treats the Church itself with respect and veneration, and cordially rejoices in the advance of its religious character and legitimate moral influence. It operates in no injurious manner on the Church ; and is, we cordially believe, whilst it benefits society at large, promoting, in no ordinary degree, the true interests of the Establishment itself. We are satisfied that it is so ; and we express the general sentiment of the body. What can a liberal and intelligent Clergyman wish more ? Why these petty jealousies ? Why this occasional manifestation of Calvinistic bitterness, or high Church assumption ? True Methodism is so much a system of charity, that spirit so breathes in the Works of its venerable Founder, and is so embodied in its institutions, that these circumstances will not change its views or spoil its temper ; but why should others make war upon a people who are not their enemies ? And why should Clergymen degrade themselves to become the organs of the scandal of petty factions, and the patrons of petty schisms ? The bait, it seems, by which their prejudices are caught, is, that the project is to bring back Methodism to its “primitive connexion” with the Church. That subject we shall, therefore, proceed to investigate.

The folly of the scheme proposed by Mr. Robinson and the *Christian Guardian*, of bringing back Methodism to what they call “primitive connexion” with the established Church, lies in these two points ; and we state them for the sake of giving information to those Church-people and their Clergy who, like the *Guardian*, are apt to speak and write without it :—

The first is, that “primitive Methodism,” as we have already stated, would be as little agreeable to the authorities of the Church, as modern Methodism. There would then be societies uncontrolled by any of the parish Clergy ; Preachers unappointed by either Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, and responsible to none of them ; laymen, Leaders of classes, and therefore spiritual teachers,—laymen, engaging in spiritual exercises, holding meetings for prayer, visiting the sick, and instructing the ignorant ; the Conference, in which neither a



Bishop, nor any clerical representative of a Bishop, could, as such, have a place ; a system of doctrines openly and publicly taught in every parish, certainly contradicting the opinions of all the Calvinistic part of the Clergy, and not very well harmonizing with those held by the majority of the remainder ; great zeal and ardour in religious exercises ; occasional revivals of religion, attended sometimes with real disorders, and more often with those which to the Clergy would appear to be real ones, and at which they perhaps would, even without cause, startle as enthusiastic. Now, this is primitive Methodism. As many of the members of societies as could be persuaded would receive the sacrament at church, and our service in church-hours would be given up : These would be the advantages to the Church, and these would be all the advantages to be set against an intimate connexion with so troublesome a system. Now, we put it to any Bishop, Rector, Vicar, or Curate, throughout the kingdom, whether he wishes Methodism, in this its “ primitive ” character and state, to be recognised and formally patronized by the Church ? The answer is obvious to all the world : He would not ; and he would determine wisely ; for the two systems, though they may be made friendly to each other, by liberal and candid administration, can never become one, nor can they operate in direct connexion. How profound, then, is the folly of speaking of a return to primitive Methodism being promoted and patronized by the Church ! Primitive Methodism is, in fact, not the thing wanted ; it is modified and altered Methodism ; and if so, then surely we ought to know what we are required to give up, and what to modify. Methodism, without its Preachers, without its lay Leaders, and its lay prayer-meetings ; without its peculiar doctrines and its distinct discipline ; that is, Methodism annihilated and non-existent ; is that only which is capable of being the subject of this notable scheme.

The second consideration to which the projectors ought to turn their attention is, that if, without any formal recognition or patronage of Methodism by the authorities of the Church, they could now induce any part of the Methodists, without

yielding any of the peculiarities of the body, to attend the services and sacraments of the Church, this state of things could not long be maintained; and that the same process of passing from a kind of irregular Christian society, into the form and order of a regular Christian church, which Methodism has already passed through, must be passed through again, and would not probably issue quite so well.

Let us suppose, that, instead of about twenty or thirty persons at Beverley, as many hundreds, scattered in different places, had been disposed to make the experiment; and instead of having weak, uninfluential men as their leaders,—instead of being a mere faction, born in the sin of dissension, and shapen in the iniquity of misrepresentation,—that persons of considerable sense and piety were at the head of them; animated only with the spirit of “primitive Methodism,” to save their own souls, and those of others;—let us suppose them to increase yearly, till they had reached from hundreds to thousands; and this increase, as in primitive times, to be reaped from the world;—what must follow, but precisely the same results? First, the number of Preachers increases; and the attachment of spiritual children to their spiritual fathers springs up with their success. Then the difficulty of perceiving on what scriptural ground a man should be separated to the work of the ministry, and not have the right of administering all the functions of the ministry. Can the Guardian remove that? Then would arise the natural preference among the people, of being administered to by those who have begotten them in the Lord, and from whose ministry they are receiving constant edification. Has the Guardian a recipe to cure that propensity? Then would come the brandishing of episcopal claims, to suppress these rising sentiments; then the examination of these claims by scriptural evidence; and unless the Guardian can supply new and better arguments, the same conclusion, that they have no support there in the exclusive extent to which they are carried, would probably be reached by the majority; who would judge, that, though there must be an ordination to the ministry, the principles of which ordination are clearly laid down in the New Testa-

ment, yet that nothing is there said of a diocesan episcopate, as the only source of ministerial authority. Along with these discussions must come on cases of conscience. Some of the converts from the world have been educated Dissenters from the Church of England, and object to her communion ; others are of the Church of Scotland, and have prejudices or principles equally strong ; in many places the Clergy are even yet unenlightened and worldly, and the objection among all becomes still more directly conscientious against communion with them. In other places the preaching of the Clergyman is unprofitable ; and where the evangelical Clergy prevail, (as we are indeed glad to find they do, though we wish many of them better views of the Gospel,) whether it be from the deficiency of their theological education, or from other causes, considerable numbers of them are not only Calvinistic, but state their Calvinism in the most crude, indigested, broad, and dangerous form. On such a ministry no Methodist society could possibly attend with regularity. From this inevitable course of things, disputes and divisions must arise between the few who would compel, and the many who would not be compelled. The certainty, therefore, is, that the system could not be persevered in ; and the probability is, that a few would merge entirely into the Church, and that the rest would become rigid Dissenters. Such is the folly of all these speculations : They aim at change, and look not at that to which change must carry them.

But it is not only to these subjects, on which the conductors of the *Guardian* may be supposed to have some natural interest as Clergymen, that they have devoted their review ; but to a critique on the internal economy of Methodism ; and they affect to join Mr. Robinson in lamenting the power of the Conference, and the great jeopardy in which the liberties of “ no small portion of His Majesty’s subjects ” are placed. That this is not a matter of very anxious concern to the *Guardian*, or to its readers, may indeed be conceived ; and another and a very different reason will suggest itself for the very large quotations and remarks in which it has indulged ; but we will take the matter as we find it ; and shall point out

to the Guardian, that, if it had taken the trouble to use but a little reflection, and to make a little inquiry, it had escaped the uneasiness of all kind apprehensions which it has indulged as to our liberties.

On the subject of power, reflection might have served without inquiry; for every thinking man must know, though Mr. Robinson and his reviewer seem never to have adverted to it, that the power of the Methodist Conference, and of the Preachers separately, is a very different thing from the power of the same Clergy, who are thus obliging enough to become careful for our good government. The power of the Clergy, and of the national Church, is that of real control and enforcement; that of the Methodist Preachers is the power of influence only. The body of Methodists is a voluntary association, which can only be held together by consent; it has no law of the courts, no power of the civil arm, to compel its contributions, or to support the office of its Ministers. That is the kind of power enjoyed by the conductors of the Guardian. But as no man is obliged to submit to the regulations of the Methodist society; and as all regulations felt to operate injuriously would, if persevered in, produce complaints, conflicts, and, finally, the dissolution of the body; even if power were really lodged in the Conference to the degree supposed, the very continuance of the society in a state of general peace from year to year would have been a sufficient proof to an intelligent reviewer, that this power could not have been exercised ill to any great extent; and that the liberties of His Majesty's subjects are not, in fact, in such jeopardy as very seriously to disturb the rest of the Christian Guardian.

Reflection, also, without the pains of inquiry, might have shown, even by the sole aid of Mr. Robinson's pamphlet, the Guardian's only text-book, that whatever degree of power the Conference possesses, it is not so onerous to the people as to afford to the Guardian any great reason for either hope or sorrow. In this large body, whose system operates throughout the whole kingdom, the existence and continuance of a course of mal-administration must necessarily be illustrated by

numerous and pregnant instances ; and these instances must necessarily be the subject of public complaint. If the Guardian knew not, its reviewer knew, that Mr. Robinson had long lived in the neighbourhood of several of the largest of the Methodist societies ; that he is a great writer of circular letters ; and, as his book shows, a man of rather gossiping habits ; and yet he only collects eight cases for illustration,—and these, when examined, shrink into misrepresentations ; one only excepted, in which the Conference redressed the act of an erring individual, and thus showed that its power was rightly used. The nature of the cases adduced by Mr. Robinson, the reviewer might have learned by inquiry. But, even avoiding that troublesome process, lest it should control the freedom of his pen, had he but reflected upon the paucity and pettiness of the cases adduced, he must at least have concluded, that, if the observation of several years, and the correspondence held with the restless and factious in different parts, with all that a habit of religious gossip could furnish, amounted to no more, there was no great reason for his clerical patrons to indulge the hope, that the administration of the Conference had so unsettled the societies, as to make a journey to York necessary, to know the terms on which they might be invited to fly from Conference tyranny to clerical protection.

The most amusing part of Mr. Robinson's Observations is, his long and grave quibbling upon that regulation which the Conference so properly placed upon its legislative power, when, after a natural course of discussion, following the death of Mr. Wesley, the constitution of the body came to be settled. This Rule provides, that, when a Quarterly Meeting objects to a new law, it shall be suspended till the next Conference, in the Circuit which that Meeting represents ; but that, if the law be confirmed by the ensuing Conference, it shall be binding. As the laws in question are general laws, by this provision every Quarterly Meeting, that is, every Circuit, and, consequently, the whole Connexion, both judges of the new law, and either tacitly approves, or expressly objects to, it ; and against the decisions of a majority of

**Circuits**, (a case which has never occurred,) the Guardian, and all others, may be well satisfied that the law would not be enforced, and could not be enforced, in a society held together by voluntary ties, and deriving no aid, like the national Church, from the civil power. That is a case much less likely to occur, than that the King should refuse his assent to Bills passed by large majorities of both Houses of Parliament; a power in the crown at which the Guardian, we dare say, is not alarmed; and which, though not alarming, is nevertheless important, since cases may arise involving vital principles, the defence of which might be worth even such a struggle as that would consequently induce.

But it is on the terms in which this regulation is expressed, that Mr. Robinson chiefly quibbles, with a view of proving, that, in adopting it, the people were cheated by the semblance of a fair concession, which the wording of the Rule took away. In the silly perversions in which he here indulges, his simple reviewer flounders with him, and partakes of his full fortune. Nor does he ever seem once to have suspected the ridiculous attitude he was taking himself, and in which he was placing the Guardian, by his implicit reliance upon a writer who was too intellectually imbecile to understand that on which he undertook to comment, or was led by mere malignity to indulge in dishonourable cavils.

Because the Conference, in order to give to every Circuit the power of immediately suspending a law to which its Quarterly Meeting might object, gives this power of suspension to the first Quarterly Meeting after the Conference, Mr. Robinson chooses to say, that the first Quarterly Meeting is held too soon after the Conference for the people to know the law; and also, that the design of this was, to evade the expression of public sentiment. This absurdity, or rather, gross perversion, is seized by the Guardian, and it is thrown into indignant wonder at the want of honesty in a body of Christian Ministers. The simple reviewer never appears to have asked himself, whether this was not too incredible to be true.

Because the Conference, very properly, provides that the

Quarterly Meeting shall be legally constituted, and must, of course, include the Preachers of the Circuit, Mr. Robinson chooses to say, (whether sillily or wilfully the Guardian never stops to inquire,) that not only a majority of the Meeting, but all the Travelling Preachers, must give their consent, or the law cannot be suspended. Here the Guardian is taken in again; and with an imperturbable gravity of folly hurls his censures upon the imaginary grievance.

Again: Because the Conference, having provided for the calm and most influential expression of the sentiment of the body on the proposal of any new Rule, by referring it to the Quarterly Meetings, guards against the contentious agitation of the body, by publications and public meetings, Mr. Robinson, in his great affection for such publications, very naturally proclaims this prohibition an abridgment of "the liberty of Englishmen;" so, of course, says the Guardian, his echo; neither of them thinking, it would seem, that "the liberty of Englishmen," in a religious society, must be regulated by the liberty and law of Christ; and neither of them asking, what the condition of that religious society would be, in which the members should do all that an Englishman has the liberty of doing.

We have not room to quote all the expressions of surprise and reproof indulged in by the Guardian, upon receiving this information as to our legislation, from his Beverley "guide, philosopher, and friend." It calls such proceeding, and very justly, only that it never existed, an affront to the understandings of the people: But surely it might have asked, whether the Conference thought so lightly of the understandings of the people, as to attempt so blundering a mode of deceiving them; and, from the very improbability of the thing, have suspected that it had been misled. It might have asked, whether any of our people ever so interpreted the Rule before; and whether they had ever been enlightened, as to the true meaning of the law, by the trick ever having been acted. It might have gone further, and have asked, indeed, whether, in fact, the Conference did itself propose the deceptive regulation, or not. And, to the last question, Mr.

Sandwith, in the postscript to his pamphlet, will answer, that the very words of this Rule, on which the Guardian, upon Mr. Robinson's authority, has bestowed so many misplaced remarks, were proposed to the Conference by gentlemen, Delegates from the Trustees and people, assembled at Leeds in 1797, and, upon their suggestion, adopted by the Conference. So much for the influence of prejudice on weak and suspicious minds.

One more case, and we have done with the particular illustrations of the competency of the Christian Guardian to become the censor of the administration of the Methodists. Mr. Robinson, after quoting the Rule above mentioned, quotes also the paragraph which follows, as though it were an inference from that Rule alone: "Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings." In doing this, he affects to wonder how such an inference could be made from such a Rule, and especially when so interpreted. The Guardian, with either the same simplicity, or from mere dupishness, wonders too; and affects to be indignant at the insult offered by it to the people. We cannot say, whether Mr. Robinson can be acquitted of an intention to deceive in this instance; whether it were possible for him to have a document under his eyes, making concessions of powers formerly enjoyed by the Conference, supplementary to another, which also makes concessions, and itself consisting of no less than seven articles, to the whole of which this passage is the conclusion, and yet mistake it, as having relation only to one. But whatever may be the construction of Mr. Robinson's understanding, one might have expected something better from his clerical reviewer, as having received by education some discipline of mind. For, though the whole document was not before him, yet the absurdity of the case ought to have awakened some doubt; and even the concluding clause was sufficient to show, that the inference was connected with something not found in the one article selected from the seven; because it refers to "different meetings," to which the article quoted has no relation at all. One moment's



examination would have discovered to the reviewer, had he wished for information, that the inference is from the whole concessions made of that power which had been deposited with the Conference by Mr. Wesley, and which constituted, in sobriety and truth, a “giving up of the greater part of the executive government into the hands of the people, as represented in their different meetings.”

The humiliations into which the Christian Guardian has plunged itself by its intemperance, incaution, and its blind confidence in a very incompetent contributor to its Review, we shall leave to its own meditations. On one or two other subjects only are we disposed to offer any remark.

The first is, the “power” of the Conference ; as to which the Guardian has many observations, but, as in former instances, no information. We shall briefly show what this power is.

It is the power of making laws ; but then they are all, in fact, according to the Rule above mentioned, proposed to the Circuits, and may be suspended in any or all of them, as before pointed out, until the sense of the Connexion shall be communicated in this influential manner to the Conference. Nor is this power of making laws so frequently called forth as those writers who have little knowledge of us suppose. The Conference is not, as they seem to dream, like a session of Parliament, putting forth numerous acts and statutes, and occupying itself in a large degree in the business of legislation. The Rules of the body are fixed ; and much legislation would be felt to be an evil. The great business of Conference is, to carry on the system on its established Rules and usages ; and most of its directory Minutes are regulations for this purpose, adapted to some changes of circumstances, rather than laws, in the proper and commonly-received acceptation of that term.

It is the power of admitting Preachers ; in conformity to the plain directory of the New Testament, that Ministers are to care for the perpetuation of the ministry, and that they are to invest it with authority in the name of Christ : principles

which are acknowledged in all churches. But with us the people have a large share, as is fit, in this work. Every candidate first becomes and continues a member of the society, with their approbation ; he acts as a Local Preacher, on trial ; and his good report, or otherwise, is collected from the societies to whom he ministers : He can only be proposed for the regular ministry by the approbation of the Quarterly Meeting of his Circuit ; and during his four years' probation, he is on trial with the people among whom he labours, as well as among his brethren.

The Conference has the power of trying offending brethren ; but then any person or persons may impeach ; and in the Special District-Meetings, called upon such complaints, the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of the Circuit are present, and vote, if that mode of trial be in any case preferred by the people bringing the accusation.

The public collections and subscriptions made in the Connexion are regular, and for known and approved objects of religious charity. And with respect to the interference of Preachers with money affairs, it may be said, that it is a part of their ministerial duty to cultivate and call forth the spirit of liberality among the people, as did the Apostle Paul ; causing them, for their spiritual good, "to abound in this grace also ;" but, like the Apostle, they are not forgetful to join others with them, to be the witnesses, and, indeed, associates, of the right application of the money so offered. In the Circuits, the finances are in the hands of the Stewards ; the Circuit Stewards are present in District-Meetings when financial matters are determined ; the Public School Fund, the Mission Fund, the Chapel Fund, the Children's Fund, are managed by gentlemen and Preachers united. Two Funds only are excepted from this ; but one of them only is raised from the people : This is the Auxiliary Fund, for affording relief to Preachers visited by peculiar affliction ; an additional aid to that allowed by the Preachers' own Annuitant Society in certain cases. This is managed by Preachers only, for reasons of delicacy, which every respectable man will hold sacred ; but of its funds and application an exact account is

published annually, and sent to every subscriber. The Preachers' Fund is the mere Annuitant Society of the Preachers themselves, raised by their own subscriptions, and occasionally fed by legacies. Of this no one but themselves has any right to ask an account; but secrecy has no motive. It has for several years been unable to meet its annual payments to the aged Preachers and widows, except by a ruinous abstraction from its capital; and were that capital at this moment divided, no aged Preacher, who has paid his subscription to it for forty years, would receive, we do not say the mere annuity on which he has a right to calculate, but not even the sum of money which he has paid into it; and yet this Fund has been represented by the wicked or the ignorant as the source of exhaustless wealth to its members. The aid which it formerly derived from the Auxiliary Fund having for many years ceased, the whole proceeds of that Auxiliary, since the year 1813, have been expended on other objects, according to the printed Reports.

The power of the Preachers in their Circuits is in no instance more than the power of preserving and enforcing the established doctrines and Rules of the body; and for doing this, and the manner of doing this, they are every year, or, rather, constantly, amenable. It is their ministerial duty to open the doors of the church to receive sincere seekers of salvation; but none can be admitted a member if the Leaders' Meeting declare him improper. It is a part of their inalienable ministerial duty to expel from the society in cases of obstinate criminality and neglect of rule; but the charge must be proved at a Leaders' Meeting. It is their duty to look out for proper persons to put into the various offices of the body, and the nomination is, therefore, with them; but the approbation or rejection is with the Leaders' Meeting or the Quarterly Meeting.

Such are the general powers, checks, and balances of the constitution of modern Methodism; such is the power of the Preachers,—a power, indeed, as every wise man would wish it to be, of doing good, of executing the different parts of that office for which Ministers themselves, not the people, are

responsible to God ; but the power of doing evil, either from passion or from error of judgment, is properly and effectually restrained. As this is the power of the Preachers in their Circuits, so the principal business and office of the Conference is, to overlook the whole system, and to preserve these known and accepted laws, and rules, and usages, in unimpaired and vigorous operation, by receiving the reports of all the District Committees, and of the Committees of the different branches of administration. This is its chief work, with the exception of the power of stationing the Preachers, after the petitions of the Circuits are heard, and information received ; an office in which some have been anxious that representatives from the Circuits should have a share ; but respecting which the sober and settled opinion of the most intelligent and influential persons in every part of the kingdom is, that considering the extent and difficulty of the appointments, the experiment would be exceedingly hazardous ; whilst, so long as the Conference maintains a steady regard to public good, the practical results are not likely to be improved.

All this bears upon the second general subject to which we alluded, and which forms a part of Mr. Robinson's scheme of reform, and is recommended, no doubt in pure good-will, by the Guardian also ; namely, the introduction of lay representatives into the Conference. With all the great importance attached to this by the theoretic writers who now and then appear among us, the fact is, that little interest is felt in the question in the body generally, except as it may be partially excited in some particular places, by the publication of some pretending pamphlet. The reason of this is, that all the advantages which could rationally be expected from lay representation have been so secured in principle by the Plan of Pacification, and by subsequent measures in practice, that no such evils exist, and no such abuses have taken place, to render such a measure (which on a small scale would be disorganizing, and on a large one expensive) at all necessary. It is not, in fact, possible ; because the Conference has a fixed legal character, in which the settlement of the chapels is involved ; and, therefore, the body has been necessarily com-

pelled to seek the real advantages of check and control in another way. In that other way, they are, as we have seen, secured: Feeling them secured, the Connexion, as to general questions of government, has been long at peace; and the evils which might, and probably would, have arisen from the formation of an essentially new constitution have been escaped.

These and several other points are well discussed in the sensible pamphlets of Mr. Sandwith and Mr. Welch, both laymen; and for their general views, rather than for their refutation of the puerile pamphlet of Mr. Robinson, we recommend them. Mr. Sandwith writes calmly, sensibly, and forcibly. Mr. Welch goes more into abstract views and principles; but with an acute and penetrating mind. He has fallen, however, into one error, in representing Circuit Stewards as so essentially constituent parts of a Quarterly Meeting, that their withdrawing would dissolve it. He erects them into a distinct estate, so to speak; which is not constitutionally correct. Independent of this, however, his conclusion is sound. The manner in which both these gentlemen have come forward to resist a factious attempt to disturb the peace of the societies in the neighbourhood, does credit to their principles and talents.

In conclusion, we may observe, that whilst we advocate the scriptural principles on which Methodism rests, as well in its discipline as in its doctrines, against high Church prejudices and insinuations, we are no advocates of the theoretic views of Dissent; and much less of that pugnacious spirit which they so often generate. We think it the peculiar glory of the body to which we belong, and one which we hope will never be obscured, that its great object is, to spread scriptural Christianity through the land, and to subordinate every thing else to that. For this purpose, the religious advantages afforded by those doctrines of experimental religion which we have been taught, and by the spiritual discipline established among us, are offered to all. The Churchman may enjoy them without offence; for the body never did place itself, and is not disposed to place itself, upon any of the leading princi-

ples which constitute the basis of the separation of Dissenting churches, as the reason of its own. It encourages no disputes on these subjects ; it sanctions no sarcasms or invectives ; it has always professed its affection for the established Church, and still cherishes that sentiment ; it binds no one, from his connexion with us, to forsake her communion or her ministry. On the other hand, it can admit the theoretic Dissenter ; but he is to meet us on the proper ground, on which alone we are embodied,—to assist each other in working out our salvation, and in making our election sure. He is not to be allowed to push on among us his strong Dissenting prejudices, nor to ask of the body, to whose privileges he is admitted, to alter its principle and constitution ; since no spiritual end would be answered by it ; but, on the contrary, the evil of a sectarian spirit would be introduced, and the higher aims of the Connexion be insensibly forgotten. He is not to expect license to rail in favour of his own private views ; he would cease to respect our Founder, and the principles of the body, by urging this as part of his liberty ; and he is bound to submit, as a part of the discipline laid upon him, to hold his opinions on such questions with modesty and with deference. For the great body of our people, a vast majority, who have been collected from the world, our system, in all its fulness, is prepared. To them we are, in the proper sense, a church of Christ, with all the institutions of such a church, according to the scriptural model ; and in defence of their privileges, as such,—standing between the two smaller classes just mentioned, and knowing nothing of any other system than that in which they first drew the breath of spiritual life, and which first impressed upon them any thing like a religious character,—the remarks made in this article are designed. This is the plan of our peculiar system, which we see no reason to alter ; and if we did, we should look for wiser counsel than either the reviewer in the *Christian Guardian*, or the humble pamphlet which he has made his oracle, is able to furnish. We are aware, however, that we have but sketched several points which might with advantage have been more fully and minutely drawn, considering the ignorance which prevails as to our discipline at

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large ; and since the Guardian has furnished so notable an instance of this, in a class of men, (consisting even of Ministers, and sometimes writers also,) we propose, at a period not far distant, to present such a view of the constitution of modern Methodism, as may leave them still more inexcusable, if at any future time they follow the example of Mr. Robinson's reviewer, and write before they read.

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## REVIEW II.

*The Christian Guardian for September, 1825.*

THIS periodical has attempted something like a reply to the strictures in our numbers for July and August, upon the conduct of its Review ; but it is such a reply as passes over in total silence all the leading points of our crimination,—points which its character required that it should either explain or confess. It has done neither, and therefore pleads guilty, by this very omission, to the justice of our complaints. Had the Guardian attempted no answer at all, it might have affected to attribute its silence to its dignity ; but having replied, and left all the instances with respect to which it was charged, not only with deficiency of Christian candour, but even of literary and controversial fairness, unnoticed, the conclusion is inevitable : It has no defence to offer. In this state of the case we are not called to trespass long upon our readers ; and we may hope, that, though the Christian Guardian has not had the humility to make more than a tacit confession of misconduct, it will exercise more circumspection in future. We shall therefore only briefly advert to what the Guardian has not said, and to what it has said,—to its silence, and to its sayings,—in the article before us.

With respect to the first, it has passed over all we alleged, on its having surrendered itself, under the influence of the bait of promoting a division in a religious body, to an incompetent reviewer, when the least observation or inquiry on the part of the editors might have detected his incapacity. It has said nothing of the fact, that the reviewer himself wrote, not from Mr. Robinson's printed pamphlet, but from his manuscript ; and that the editors received and published a review of an unprinted work, of which they could know nothing, but that it was an attack upon the body of Wesleyan Methodists ; giving



themselves no concern at all to learn, whether its alleged facts were true or false ; but at once, and without inquiry, lending itself to circulate slanders against a body of Christian Ministers. It answers nothing to the still more serious charge, that, after this pamphlet, and the review founded upon it, were proved, by two other pamphlets from respectable sources, to contain misrepresentations, false statements, and slanders, it never noticed the controversy thus excited ; not correcting its own misrepresentations by the better information thus put within its reach, though more than a year had elapsed. Finally, our charge was, that it had eagerly lent itself to a disreputable and almost unknown faction, which had sprung up in a corner of the kingdom, and in another religious body, and made itself so warm a partisan in the quarrel, as to run with zeal into a discussion, not of the general subject, as it might be supposed to affect a Churchman ; but of questions of the interior economy of Methodism, in which it had no natural interest at all, and which interest could only have been artificially created, by an intemperance and hostility not over creditable to a religious publication. Some of these charges affect the literary, others the Christian, character of the Guardian ; and with respect to none of them has it been able to offer the least defence. In the humbling circumstances in which this periodical has placed itself, to whom do we wish the censures to extend, which, in pure self-defence, we have been obliged, very reluctantly, to lay upon it ? Not certainly to the body of serious Church-people who may be its constant readers ; not to the Clergy whom it is understood to represent ; for we are sure, that, though incautious and illiberal individuals may be found among them, as among all other bodies of men, yet they have too much respect for character and Christianity, to approve of this departure from the bounds of legitimate criticism and controversy, for the sake of making an illiberal warfare upon other religious communities. We fix the censure upon the editors themselves, whoever they may be, who have taken a much greater liberty with their readers, and the Clergy usually identified with them, than they have done with us, and to whom they are more immediately

amenable. To the advice of wiser and graver minds than their own, we are content to leave them.

Having done with the Guardian's silence, we have a remark or two to offer on what it has said respecting some subjects which seem to have been introduced rather for the purpose of making up the appearance of an article in reply to our strictures, than with any sober purpose of adducing a review of Dr. Clarke's *Wesley Family*, or Mr. Moore's *Life of Mr. Wesley*. We are sorry to observe no great improvement in candour or intelligence in what relates to Methodism; and are rather surprised that the editors should have gone to the same quarter as before for a review, when they had been so grievously betrayed by the weakness of the same writer.

This agent of the editors of the Guardian, to whom they seem to have deputed the Methodistical department of their work, tells the world, in the commencement of the article, that the reading of our people is, on a sort of system, confined to works published at our own Book-Room; and the editors show their competency by admitting this, it would seem, without inquiry. How easily might both have known, that this said Book-Room publishes catalogues of books, from time to time, in all departments of useful and general knowledge, as well as theology; and is the agent for executing orders for every description of books from all parts of the Connexion. From premises thus soundly laid, it is inferred, that "the literature of the Methodists is confined within very narrow and scanty limits." If it be so, it is not for want of opportunity, at least, since the same means of procuring books is open to them as to all other people; and, in addition to this, through the catalogues of the Book-Room, and the parcels sent into every Circuit, persons living in the most obscure villages and districts of the kingdom get the knowledge of books, and have means of procuring them, which they never could otherwise have had. It is further stated, that somebody, the reviewer knows not who, confines the choice of books among our people "to a series provided according to one pattern;" and, ergo, the Methodists "possess less information than others." Now, we might deny the

conclusion, whatever becomes of the premise ; for, according to their rank in life, they do not possess less information than others ; but as to the premise itself, it is an idle dream. The standard books of the body are such as, by the mercy of God, we have abundant reason to be thankful for ; and they would form a very illuminating part of the library of the editors of the Guardian, did they feel it any part of their duty to understand the Methodism on which they write so confidently ; but there is no “provided series,” no “paring down to a pattern.” Thus the reviewer misleads the editors ; and they, in their simplicity, put forth this also without inquiry.

“The Methodist system of class-meetings, prayer-meetings, &c., is more calculated to produce a talkative than a studious and contemplative religion, and tends very much to occupy the time which might be devoted to reading.” Is this ignorance, or is it worse ? The Guardian has undertaken to defend primitive Methodism, and to invite the modern Methodists to submit themselves to the Church. In pursuance of this scheme it is rather bad policy to indulge an attack upon class-meetings and prayer-meetings. This shows how much either editors or reviewers, or Mr. Robinson, their instrument, care about primitive Methodism, except as a means of venting feelings of radical hostility to the whole system, whether old or new, primitive or modern. But let us advert to the knowledge of facts which this statement contains. A Methodist spends one hour in a week at his class, perhaps two at prayer-meetings ; and this we are told so occupies his time as to keep him from reading. And, of course, the reviewer thinks that in meetings for religious conversation and for prayer, nothing is to be learned, and no one can be made wiser. We may well ask whether these are fitting sentiments for a religious publication ; to say nothing of the charity which declares the religion of a whole body of people, twenty or ten of whom the reviewer, we presume, never knew, to be a merely “talkative” one.

The Guardian reviewer states, that Mr. Moore, in his *Life of Mr. Wesley*, “has avoided many of those enthusiastical

and unguarded sentiments and expressions which so frequently occur in the early productions of Methodism." Well, then, at least, here is one point in which the reviewer gives up the primitive Methodism, which he is anxious to recommend. The truth, however, is, that all this is sheer ignorance. We will engage to say that the reviewer could not name those "early productions of Methodism" to which he alludes; that he never read them; and further, that he never read a tenth part of Mr. Moore's work which he reviews, or he would have seen that it is full of those sentiments which he calls "enthusiastical and unguarded;" for that is its distinguishing character, and, as we think, its principal excellence.

The reviewer inserts an extract from Mr. Wesley, to prove that he "more correctly distinguished between faith and assurance than the generality of his followers." Now, we ask, how he knows that the generality of Mr. Wesley's followers do not make this distinction. They were taught to make it in Mr. Wesley's writings; they read and venerate these writings; this distinction has been made in all the sermons of their most influential Preachers; it is found uniformly in all the writings which have any authority among them, since Mr. Wesley's days; and the most simple person among us could have told the reviewer that, as assurance, or "a sense of pardon," is consequent on believing, it must be distinguished from believing. The fact is, the reviewer got hold of a quotation from Mr. Wesley which he did not understand; and he takes it as giving a sanction to a favourite notion of the Guardian, that among persons to whom the Gospel is clearly preached, a sense of pardon is not connected with justifying faith, except in some special cases. But in this very quotation in which Mr. Wesley makes so logical a distinction between faith and assurance he lays it down, that "a distinct, explicit assurance, that my sins are forgiven, is the common privilege of real Christians." Both editors and reviewer in this case might, by a very little reading, and even less inquiry, have known that there is nothing in this quotation from Mr. Wesley which the body does not most explicitly hold to this hour.

The Christian Guardian professes to represent not merely the Calvinistic part of the evangelical Clergy, but some of the anti-Calvinistic also. We are satisfied in believing that in this controversy, in which it has betrayed so much heat and so much incompetency, it has represented neither; and that its degradation is confined to its conductors alone. No respectable part of the evangelical body of the Church of England can be satisfied with being thus personated. They may not object to occasional controversy, nor do we; but they must object to be identified with men who write without any information, who blunder through mere ignorance, and at once set candour and knowledge at defiance. Of this entire and absolute disqualification to write on the subject of Methodism, we have given abundant proof; and it will become the friends of that publication in the Church, if they would not be committed with it, either to insist upon its conductors giving up such controversies as the present, or that they shall place them in more qualified hands. But the instances are not exhausted; the concluding page is full of them. They ask us "honestly to avow our real sentiments" as to the Church; as though we had never done that which we have done a thousand times. They aver that we are, "in general, decidedly hostile to the Church;" which they ought to have known is decidedly untrue. They assert that our separation from the Church, as far as it has gone, is defended "in exact accordance with the principles of other Dissenting denominations." Nothing can show greater ignorance of the Dissenting controversy; since, if all the reasons we have ever given for separation were removed, the Dissenter would be bound by his first principles to renounce all communion with the national Establishment; and to those principles none but the minority of theoretic Dissenters among us attach any weight. Similar instances might be given were it necessary; but we now quit the Guardian, and leave it in the hands of those of its own community whom it professes to represent. It is a mistake, that our observations upon its late articles on Methodism have proceeded from impatience of remark or even censure. The opinions and conduct of all religious bodies, as well as other

communities, lie open to criticism. Let the Guardian go as often and as copiously as it may seem good to its conductors into subjects in which, as a body, we may feel ourselves involved, we shall meet fair and candid controversy in a fair and candid spirit ; but, in the name of truth and honesty, let us have opponents, if we must have them, who possess at least a common acquaintance with the subjects on which they write ; and men who, if they do not respect us, will, at least, respect themselves.

## REVIEW III.

*The Christian Guardian for November, 1825.*

THE Christian Guardian having, in no very temperate article, in the last number, persisted in almost entirely turning its back upon all the points in discussion between us ; we may now, in a few words, close a controversy, in which we were not the assailants, but the defendants. Little has been left to this publication, but to reiterate its ill opinion of modern Methodism ; which opinion, as we have abundantly shown, being founded in an almost entire ignorance, both of what modern Methodism is, and what primitive Methodism was, can derive no weight from knowledge, and quite as little from candour. We complained not of fair discussion of the doctrine, or discipline, or proceedings, of the religious body we represent, if conducted by men who would give themselves the trouble to be informed concerning the subjects on which they write ; but we did complain of the hasty slanders of intemperate and incompetent writers, equally humbling to the literary and to the religious character of a periodical work, which it is no pleasure to us to see placed in such a position. We have seen nothing in the replies of the Guardian to alter the case ; but much, indeed, to aggravate it ; since, convicted of the fact of publishing attacks upon a religious body, without giving itself time to inquire into their truth,—and then, having the means of correcting its own statements, by the publication of two pamphlets, one of which it confesses to have seen,—the Guardian still persevered, knowingly, not only in keeping silence as to the facts, but in reasoning and railing from them, as though they had never been corrected.

That this is not a very consolatory situation in which to find itself, we can well concede to the Guardian ; but it is not to be remedied by evil surmises and hard speeches ; and

it is even now too late to remedy it by concession ; since it has pertinaciously refused to do an act of controversial justice, though the better information has been placed within its reach.

What the Guardian has said in defence we will, however, notice : All the rest it has full leave from us to place to its own credit.

It denies having reviewed Mr. Robinson's pamphlet from the manuscript. In ordinary cases, there would be no harm, had it done this. But whether from proof-sheets, or from manuscript, it makes no difference : All we say is, that it would have been but decent, when the propagation of slander was in question, to have waited the publication of the pamphlet ; and thus to have put in at least for a chance of hearing the other side. This the Guardian did not ; and the *animus* of its reviewer could not, therefore, be mistaken. As to what is said respecting our August number being seen early in July, as affording a parallel case ; the fact is, that number was, *bonâ fide*, published on the 30th of June, as is distinctly stated on the cover of our July number ; and was in all parts of the country long before July 18th, when the remarks upon it came into the hands of the Guardian.

On the second point, that the editors had not subsequently noticed the correction of the facts on which they had built both their reasoning and censures, they now tell us, that they had seen Mr. Sandwith's pamphlet, and have since seen Mr. Welch's ; but that they thought them "unworthy of notice." Had they been on the other side, probably some worthiness would have been assigned to them ; and in how great a degree, we may judge from that copiousness of eulogy bestowed upon Mr. Robinson's pamphlet, which, but for its subject, could surely have been little to the taste of the Guardian. But all this is wholly beside the question ; and the Guardian must not trifle thus with the understandings of its readers. The point is not, what the Guardian thinks of these pamphlets, as to style, reasoning, or any other adjunct. It is not, whether Messrs. Sandwith and Welch silence Mr. Robinson's Observations by "reasoning ;" which



is the transparent hiding-place to which the Guardian betakes itself. The case, in all that is at issue between us and the Guardian, is one of facts, as the basis of reasonings and reprehensions ; and not, whether the reasonings are good or bad, or the reprehensions just or unjust, allowing the facts to be true. Mr. Robinson's alleged facts—those very facts on which the Guardian reasoned and reprehended with so much readiness—are disproved, utterly disproved, in those pamphlets ; so disproved, that no man can doubt the disproof, in the main instances ; so disproved, that the Guardian itself will not stake its credit, by attempting to show that they are not disproved ; and yet the Guardian has persevered, by not placing the disproof before its readers, in upholding the slanders which it grounded upon them.

Here, then, we leave the Guardian, wishing it, as before, more patience in investigation, and more fairness in controversy.

## REVIEW IV.

*The State of the Protestant Religion in Germany, in a Series of Discourses preached before the University of Cambridge. By the Rev. Hugh James Rose, M.A., of Trinity College, &c. Pp. 184. 8vo.*

THE subject chosen for these Discourses is but remotely connected with the legitimate work of the pulpit, which is to illustrate, defend, and enforce the doctrines and precepts of the word of God ; and especially since the intention of the Preacher was rather to produce an admonitory exhibition of the errors which have overrun the German Protestant churches, than to refute them. This extensive and awful dereliction of the faith of their fathers, and of the Reformation, here charged so pointedly, and with so painful an accumulation of evidence, upon a large part of Protestant Christendom, was also capable of a much more powerful and practical application, particularly to students in divinity, than the Preacher has made, or attempted. The information, however, which is contained in the Discourses, and the appended notes, will, to a great part of the religious public, be new ; and to many who were generally acquainted with the heresies of Protestant Germany, they will appear more detailed, discriminating, and satisfactory. They contain, also, many valuable principles and observations, some of common concern to Christians, and others of interest chiefly to the members of the Church, of which the author appears to be a serious and able Minister.

For the sake of the lessons of instruction to be derived by all orthodox religious bodies from the account here presented of the progress and consummation of the most deadly errors, we have directed the attention of our readers to this volume ; and particularly as it presents so affecting a view of the moral state of these churches of the Reformation ; in which, however, by the blessing of God, many encouraging symptoms

now begin to appear, of a return to truth, and of a revival of the spirit of religion.

The author very properly commences his work by expressing his disapprobation of those sweeping charges against the German Divines, to which the broad and obvious errors and blasphemies of too many of them have led some indiscriminating writers.

“Until about the middle of the last century, or a little earlier, the German Divines as a body, and especially those of the Lutheran Church, were as orthodox, as widely learned, and as remarkable for their talents, as any body of Divines; their works deserve to be constantly studied; and he does a very ill service to a young Divine, who, by a careless mode of expression, prejudices him against a body of writers, from whom he will never fail to derive improvement, and from some of whose writings he will gain information which he would seek in vain elsewhere.” (Page xii.)

This is true, as well as charitable; and the real sources of the errors of their later Divines are as justly stated to be, not, as some have thought, mere frivolity, and the dominion of the imagination; but those mental habits, which, though under the views of literature they are more respectable, do, for that very reason, bring forth fruits more deleterious and more delusive.

“They are owing to the perplexity arising from too deep consideration, from an unwillingness to rest on obvious causes, from seeking deeper ones in what appear philosophical grounds, and from an undue estimation of the powers of the mind. Of all nations, the Germans are the least liable to a charge of superficial thought and consideration.” (Page xi.)

The exciting causes of the growth and prevalence of those errors, to which such a habit could not but lead the unsanctified mind, when professionally devoted to the study of theology and biblical literature, the author lays down to be, the too great copiousness of those German confessions of faith, of which they were required to profess their belief; the want of efficient ecclesiastical control, both in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches; and the absence of an obligatory

**Liturgy.** There is great weight in what he says on these points, to which we shall again advert, though we are not disposed to assign to them quite so much influence as the author himself; nor to suffer them to hide facts, without which these circumstances could not so powerfully have operated. It is, indeed, remarkable, that the sad and long-continued declension of the Ministers of the German Churches in piety and zeal, and even in manners, before the commencement of open apostasy, should have been overlooked by the author, as preparing the hearts of the people, by a natural, and we may say necessary, process, to be led astray by the illusions of a vain philosophy, or the misapplication of a sound one to the subject of religion. Had a greater number of the German Clergy been less learned, and less intellectual in their habits, they would have been content with a careless and cold orthodoxy, in all points of faith not relating immediately to the work of God in the heart; or, being learned and intellectually active, had ecclesiastical control been more efficient in their Churches, they would have subscribed their Confessions dishonestly, and abstained from gross and open attacks upon their doctrines. They found some license in the constitution of their Churches; but the reason why they so painfully abused it, is to be found, not chiefly in that license itself, but in those moral causes which had destroyed all reverence for authority, and all subjection even to the word of God. The whole history of Pietism in Germany is in proof of the low state of morals and religion among both Clergy and laity; although our author insinuates that Pietism, in some degree, paved the way to the errors of subsequent times. But for this corrupt state of things in Germany, Pietism could have made no progress. The greatest and the best body of the Pietists remained within the pale of the Lutheran Church, and sought for no changes in its doctrine or discipline. Their object was, the revival of piety, and the reformation of the seminaries of learning. They acquired influence only by appeals to known and open and general instances of the decay of the one, and the corruption of the other; and they were met with hostility, persecution, and a determination to resist

this call of God, delivered to them by many most eminent and devoted men. This hostility, perhaps, more than any thing else, impelled a part of them into extravagancies, which, however, in most instances, were greatly exaggerated by those who were enemies, not so much of Pietism as of piety. The great principle of Spener, that "only a converted or regenerated theologian can attain any true knowledge of his science," is referred to by the author; but only to connect it with other notions of his, somewhat mystical, (though not so much so as they have been represented,) and which were supposed to undervalue human learning as the means of discovering the truth of the Scriptures. Now, the errors connected by Spener with this "grand position" of his stand by themselves; they affect not this position itself; and it is rather surprising that the author could have before him all that mass of errors which he has verified, as held by the later German theologians, without perceiving that, in fact, the source of these monstrous evils lay in the heart; and that, if even what is called, in general language, mere orthodoxy, had been preserved, there is a large class of truths which go to make up the true orthodoxy of an evangelical faith, on which the vital power of religion so fully depends, and the knowledge of which can only be clearly attained by one whose heart is right with God; or, in the words of Spener, and of Scripture, who is "converted and regenerated."

But we proceed to sketch the outline of that awful defection from truth, among the Preachers, the theologians, the critics in sacred literature, and the theological Professors in the Colleges, of the German Protestant Churches. The first step in this sorrowful gradation to a depth of falsehood and blasphemy, to which certainly no body of Christian Ministers, so large, so learned and influential, in any age or period of the church, ever before fell, was, contempt for the authority of the Divines of the Reformation and of the subsequent age. They were about to set out on a voyage of discovery; and it was necessary to assume, that truth still inhabited some *terra incognita*, to which neither Luther, Melancthon, nor their early disciples, had ever found access.

“One of this school is pleased indeed to denominate the whole even of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century, the age of theological barbarism, an age, be it remembered, which produced, in the Lutheran Church alone, Calovius, Schmidt, Hackspan, Walther, Glass, and the Carpzoffs, and others, as many and as great writers as any church can boast in an equal space of time; writers, whose works are, and ever will be, in the hands of the theological student. The general statements of the innovators amount to this, that the Divines of the age of which we speak had neither the inclination nor the power to do any thing but fortify their own systems, which were dogmatical, and not to search out truth for themselves from Scripture; that theology as a science was left from the epoch of the Reformation as it had been received from the schoolmen; that the interpretation of the Bible was made the slave, not the mistress, of dogmatical theology as it ought to be,” &c. (Pages 31, 32.)

The vain conceit that the doctrines of religion were capable of philosophic demonstration, which obtained among the followers of Wolf, is considered by the author as having hastened onward the progress of error. “We find some of them not content with applying demonstration to the truth of the system; but endeavouring to establish each separate dogma, the Trinity, the nature of the Redeemer, the incarnation, the eternity of punishment, on philosophical, and, strange as it may appear, some of these truths on mathematical, grounds.” We have had instances of this in our own country; and the reason why they have done little injury is, that none of those who thus presumed, whether learned or half-learned, had success enough to form a school. So far as such a theory does obtain influence, it must necessarily be mischievous. The first authors may hold the mysteries of Christianity sacred; they may fancy that they can render faith in them more easy by letting in demonstrative evidence; which, indeed, were the subjects capable of it, would render faith unnecessary: But they are equally guilty of a vain presumption in their own powers, and of a want of real reverence to God and to his revelation. With them this boast of demonstration generally

ends in the rejection of some truth, or the adoption of some positive error ; whilst their followers fail not to bound over the limits at which they have stopped. The fallacy of the whole lies in assuming, that divine things are wholly on a level with those which the human mind can grasp, and may, therefore, be compared with them. One of these consequences must, therefore, follow ; either that the mind is exalted above its own sphere, or, that divine things are brought down below theirs. In the former case, a dogmatical pride is the result ; in the latter, the scheme of revelation is stripped of its divinity, and sinks gradually into a system of human philosophy, with the empty name of a revelation still appended to it to save appearances. What can bear the test of the philosophical standard, is retained ; and what cannot be thus proved is, by degrees, rejected ; so that, as the author justly observes, “ the Scripture is no longer the ground of religious truth, but a sort of witness to be compelled to assent to any conclusions at which this philosophy may arrive.”

The effect in Germany was speedily developed ; though “ Wolf, the founder of this school, and most of his followers, were pious and faithful Christians.” By carrying demonstrative evidence beyond its own province, they had nurtured in their followers a vain confidence in human reason ; and the next and still more fatal step was, that it was the province of human reason in an enlightened and intellectual age, to perfect Christianity,—which, it was contended, had hitherto existed in a low and degraded state,—and to perfect that system, of which the elements only were contained in the Scripture. All restraint was broken by this principle. Philosophy, good and bad, was left to build up these elements according to its own views ; and as, after all, many of these elements were found to be too untractable and too rudely shaped, to accord with the plans of these manifold constructions, formed according to every pattern, except that in the mount ; when the stone could not be squared and framed by any art which these builders possessed, it was rejected, even to the head-stone of the corner. Semler appears to have been the author of that famous theory of accommodation which, in

the hands of his followers, became "the most formidable weapon ever devised for the destruction of Christianity." We here use the words of the author ; and, as far as Germany is concerned, his language is not too strong. We may add, that it was the most impudent theory that was ever advocated by men professing still to be Christians ; and one, the avowal of which can scarcely be accounted for, except on the ground that as, because of their profession, it was not convenient for these teachers of theology and Ministers of the German Churches to disavow Christianity altogether ; it was devised and maintained, in order to connect the name of the Christian profession with substantial and almost undisguised Deism. This theory was, that we are not to take all the declarations of Scripture as addressed to us ; but to consider them as, in many points, purposely adapted to the feelings and dispositions of the age when they originated, but by no means to be received by another and more enlightened period ; that, in fact, Jesus himself and his Apostles had accommodated themselves in their doctrines to the barbarism, ignorance, and prejudices of the Jews ; and that it was, therefore, our duty to reject the whole of this temporary part of Christianity, and retain only what is substantial and eternal. In plain words, they assumed, as the very basis of their scriptural interpretations, the blasphemous principle, that our Lord and his Apostles either taught or connived at doctrines absolutely false, rather than they would consent to shock the prejudices of their hearers. This principle is shown at length by the author to run through the whole maze of error into which this body of Protestant Divines themselves wandered and led their flocks. We have neither space nor inclination to go into the detail of this great and shameful apostasy, nor to exhibit the instances given or referred to by the author, in the works of their most influential writers and critics. It is enough to say, that the chairs of theology, and the very pulpits, were turned into the seats of the scornful ; and that where doctrines were at all preached, they were too frequently of this daring and infidel character. It became even at least a negative good, that the sermons delivered were often discourses on the



best modes of cultivating corn and wine ; and the Preachers employed the Sabbath and the church in instructing their flocks how to choose the best kinds of potatoes, or to enforce upon them the benefits of vaccination. Undisguised infidelity has in no country treated the grand evidences of the truth of Christianity with greater contumely, or been more offensive in its attacks upon the Prophets, or more ridiculous in its attempts to account, on natural principles, for the miracles. Extremes of every kind were produced ; philosophic mysticism, pantheism, and atheism. Our readers will ask, however, what was the moral effect of this appalling apostasy of the teachers of religion upon the people ; and our author has given the answer, from one of these rationalizing Divines themselves, whose statement is not, therefore, likely to be too highly coloured. It is from a pamphlet of Bretschneider, published in 1822, and the substance is : “ Indifference to religion among all classes ; that formerly the Bible used to be in every house, but now the people either do not possess it, or, as formerly, read it ; that few attend the churches, which are now too large, though fifty years ago they were too small ; that few honour the Sabbath ; that there are now few students of theology, compared with those in law and medicine ; that if things go on so, there will shortly not be persons to supply the various ecclesiastical offices ; that preaching had fallen into contempt ; and that distrust and suspicion of the doctrines of Christianity prevailed among all classes.” Melancholy as this picture is, nothing in it can surprise any one, except it is, that the very persons who have created the evil should themselves be astonished at its existence, or even affect to be so. The religious state of Germany was brought to a rapid tendency to a total extinction of even the forms and apparatus of Christianity ; a result which would, in all probability, have taken place in a few years, but that the mercy of God has begun to answer the prayers of the few faithful, who are left as the gleanings of grapes after the vintage ; and to revive, in some active, learned, and influential men, the spirit of primitive faith and zeal.

We stated above, that the causes of this apostasy, assigned

by our author, were, the want of explicit articles of faith, of ecclesiastical control, and of an obligatory liturgy. The principal moral of these discourses is, in consequence, the advantage and safety of the Church of England, which possesses all these. We have not the least inclination to diminish the force of any thing which Mr. Rose has said on these points; but the view which he has taken of the subject is much too partial. Let us grant, that a church, substantially scriptural in discipline, is supported by the state,—a very beneficial arrangement, in our judgment, when the rights of conscience and religious liberty are not interfered with; let us allow that the articles of her faith, though comprising points on which good men may greatly differ, yet, in fundamentals, agree with the holy Scriptures; let us suppose that her constitution is such, that there is, whether by episcopacy, or by presbyteries and general assemblies, an efficient ecclesiastical control, so that no individual Pastor or church shall promulgate error, without being liable to discipline,—a point in which independent churches appear to be unavoidably defective; let us further allow, that an evangelical liturgy is appointed, and that the exhibition of a great body of scriptural truth, to the constant notice of the congregations, is thereby provided for; (another most important advantage;) yet still, the question is, whether these alone are sufficient to preserve the spirit of truth and piety, or even the mere forms, amidst temptations to religious declension and error. Attaching all reasonable importance to these institutions, we decidedly think they are not sufficient; and that, therefore, for any writer to fix upon them as almost the only safeguards of truth, is very fallacious. The real advantage appears to be this,—and it is no unimportant one,—that as, when many religious societies are bound together by a common discipline, and placed under a common government, call them, in this form, a Church, or a Connexion, or any thing else, they are not so liable to change as small and unconnected bodies; and as the ancient *formulae* of faith and devotion root themselves in the prejudices of mankind, and, when scriptural as to their substance, appeal to the common sense of plain men, for their agreement with the

Scriptures,—then, in cases of religious declension, the forms of faith and piety will often outlive their spirit ; and thus they afford a high vantage ground of attack and persuasion for the champions of ancient faith, and for those whom God in his mercy may call, in such Churches, to be the instruments of “reviving his work in the midst of the years.” They serve, too, the equally important end of preserving, on what are called orthodox points, the faith of the common people, for a longer period ; though, without a living and heaven-commissioned ministry,—without the exposition and array of truth in the pulpit, addressed to the heart and conscience, as to the mass, they remain a dead letter. This, in fact, was their operation in Germany, till within the last century, faulty as the author considers the constitution of its Churches, and inferior, probably, in some respects, as it is to that of the Church of England.

But unless there are counteracting agencies operating from without, upon a Church which has thus generally lost the spirit of piety ; and if, as in Germany, the very learning and intellectual activity of its Clergy, joined to what would appear to be a temptation arising out of the national genius, a tendency to perplex the mind by the very overworking of its powers, in some, and to mystic fancies in others,—and that in an age when the passion for novelty in almost every thing had been excited, and philosophy had arranged herself so often on the side of infidelity ; to which must be added, the demoralizing effects of frequent wars, and rapid political changes ; no improvements in the mere constitution of such Churches could, of themselves, have been sufficient to prevent the loss of the forms and guards of truth from following the loss of its moral influence. If a few of the Clergy and Professors of Theology depart from the faith, under the influence of the temptations of the time, why not the majority ? Why not the ecclesiastical rulers themselves ? Why not the civil Governors, the learned and noble of the land ? And then what should hinder a total disregard of the forms of a Church, or their accommodation to the new and more rational system ? If men have taken such liberties with the Scriptures themselves, what

should restrain them from explaining away, altering, and rejecting, what is confessedly human? There were, at one time, as our author acknowledges, fearful indications of a theological change, and a strong resistance to being bound by doctrinal subscriptions, in the Church of England; there have been free-thinking Divines within her pale; and the Prelacy itself has not been free from the infection of the German theology. If she has escaped so well, she owes it not merely to the greater explicitness of her Articles, or her more efficient ecclesiastical control; but, principally, to what Germany had not,—the existence, in this country, of religious toleration, in its proper sense; and to an extraordinary revival of the spirit of religion in the land, previous to that tremendous trial of the faith of Christendom which arose towards the close of the last century. This interposition of God had prepared agents, both in the Church and out of it, manfully to contend for the faith, instead of basely going over to the camp of the enemy, like the Princes, Nobles, Priests, and Professors of Germany.

Religious decays are to be prevented in Churches, only by the faithfulness of their Ministers and members. They must “cleanse their way, by taking heed thereto, according to the word of God.” It is thus that the Spirit of God continues to communicate to them his light and blessing; and only thus, save in those occasional sovereign dispensations of mercy to them, in which springs of water, unsought for and unasked except by the great Intercessor himself, suddenly break forth in the dry ground, where the vegetation stands sapless and withered, the melancholy relics of a former fertility. But though what depends upon the free-agency of the many, cannot be effectually controlled by human means and arrangements, the right use of that agency itself may, by the divine blessing, be greatly aided by them; and the German apostasy teaches, with most impressive emphasis, several lessons which have escaped the remark of the author. It teaches, that mere orthodoxy, in its usual acceptation, offers but a feeble barrier to the most fatal errors, when they come in with a tide of favouring circumstances. The German Churches were long coldly orthodox; and, comparatively, have been but recently

heretical. But it was in the days of their orthodoxy, when neither the Godhead of our Lord, nor his sacrifice, nor the offices of the Holy Spirit, were questioned, that they resisted and even persecuted vital and influential godliness, under the name of Pietism. Error had, therefore, to contend with mere opinion; not with principle. They who so believed had no witness in themselves; and as the religion of the heart had been ridiculed or persecuted out of the land, the treacherous, unsubdued spirit of the world within opened the gates as soon as the enemy appeared before the city. Such will be the result, more or less, in all Churches, where orthodox opinions are not connected with the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the conquest of sin in the heart.

It teaches, too, that human learning, separate from piety, often very fatally misleads the teachers of a Church; and that it is not enough that theology should be studied; it must be experienced, in all those branches in which it is intended to form and guide "the new creature." For what can be expected from even Professors of Theology, who never pray for divine teaching; who deny the aids of the Spirit in explaining his own revelations, or have no heart to seek them? Suppose them restrained by authority from an open avowal of heterodoxy; suppose that they, by chance, apply their learning rightly to defend some of the leading doctrinal truths of Christianity; yet in what is essential in connexion with these, to produce and maintain the spirit of piety in a Church, without which its forms cannot very long be upheld,—the work of God in the soul of man, the process from darkness to light, from guilt to pardon, from corruptness to sanctity,—they are and must be the blind leaders of the blind; and in proportion as they write and preach down all that is vital in Christianity in the Church to which they belong, they diminish its power of resistance to the common enemy. Its juices are dried up; its heart is consumed with rottenness; and it presents nothing to the storm but the hollow bark, surmounted with branches and leaves, which only expose it to the severer rage of the tempest. He is an enthusiast who denies the usefulness of learning, in various branches of theological study; but he

who would trust to that, as his Church's shield of faith, ought to remember the numerous and very learned theologues and critics of Germany.

The apostasy of the German Churches also marks with equal strength that great abuse which has crept into so many national and even other Churches, that of educating youth to the ministry as a profession, without precognition of their conversion to Christ ; and the necessary consequence, which we believe no ecclesiastical control can fully prevent, where the practice is admitted, of filling a Church with worldly, and careless, and, as to all the great objects of the ministry, with incompetent Ministers. In the Roman Catholic Church, where the efficacy of sacraments is made to depend principally upon the supposed regularity of the order of the administrator, there is a consistency in the practice ; but this has been the bane of Protestantism, and is directly opposed to all its true principles. Carelessness, powerless or misleading preaching, deficient example, and often the manifested enmity of the carnal heart to the very Gospel of which the man is a professed teacher, are the results, as to the ministry ; the decay of religious knowledge and habits follows in the Church so circumstanced. The great argument for this has been, the necessity of providing Churches with Ministers ; which is sufficiently answered by the fact before referred to, as stated by one of the German Divines, only four years ago, that the theological students had become so few, that the ecclesiastical offices could not be filled. This is the natural effect of destroying the spirit of religion, from which alone the ministry can be fully and efficiently supplied ; and of departing from that plain precept, of praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers,—a precept which supposes, that, whatever means are used, he is to be acknowledged as overruling, and controlling, and directing the whole.

Nor less, in reading this account of the fall of the continental Churches, can we fail to be reminded of the value and the beneficial effects of religious liberty. In Germany it does not exist ; and scarcely in Switzerland. The different Confessions are tolerated as bodies ; but, to the shame of all

Protestantism, should a few pious people meet together in their own houses, to read the Scriptures, and to pray, and to endeavour to benefit their neighbours in their religious interests, they become objects of persecution and suppression. Thus, recently, in the Pays de Vaud, for these acts, men have been imprisoned and exiled ; they have been sentenced to depart the country ; but, by a refinement of barbarism, only worthy of Popery, they have been denied their passports, and obliged, therefore, to return from the frontier ; though return within the term of banishment, was to expose them to still severer penalties. The former persecutions of Pietism show the character of German toleration ; and thus were the people and their children, without any relief at all, bound down, and obliged to attend that corrupting and soul-destroying ministry, of which Mr. Rose has drawn the picture in his Discourses. We see the happy effect of better views and better laws in our own country. It is true, that the English Presbyterian Churches have generally departed from the faith ; but the people were not bound to them ; and their deserted places of worship show, that they found out other folds, and better pastures. The national Church was, indeed, at one time, most painfully destitute of evangelical Ministers, and of the spirit of religion ; but the tolerant laws of the country protected the orthodox sects ; and under the shadow of the laws, that revival of religion took place within her pale, which, had it occurred in Germany, being in so many respects irregular, would have been suppressed by the secular arm, aiding clerical hostility. The result has been beneficial to all. The Church and the sects have mutually “provoked each other to love and good works ;” and nothing is necessary, but that, with the growing efficiency of all, we should cultivate the spirit of mutual charity. The contrast between what the Church of England now is, and what the German Churches have become, is as striking a comment on the moral operation of religious liberty as can be pointed out.

With respect to Germany, we rejoice, however, to know, that most encouraging symptoms of a better state of things begin to appear. Several of her most learned and influential

Professors and Divines have bowed to the faith, and boldly contend for it. Several pious people have been raised up in various places, despised, ridiculed, and persecuted ; but still growing bold in their confession of Christ, and bearing his cross meekly. Perhaps the very indifference to religion which scepticism has produced there may stay the arm of direct persecution ; and the horrible extremes into which the teachers of religion have run may have prepared many, by a natural reaction, to listen to those who offer Christianity in its simplicity. Above all, we are to recognise in this the hand of God ; and to pray, that, by the effusion of his Holy Spirit, he may multiply his faithful witnesses, and roll away from Protestantism the reproach of the great apostasy of the Continent, and re-convert this wilderness, overrun with weeds and poisons, into the garden of the Lord.

The following remarks of the author, in conclusion, are just and forcible :—

“ I have now terminated such a review of the state of Protestantism in Germany, as the limits of these Discourses, and my own imperfect knowledge, will allow. Even from that imperfect sketch, however, many important lessons may be drawn. The greatest of all is assuredly the conviction which it impresses so deeply, that unassisted reason never fails to mislead those who resign themselves to its guidance ; that whatever form it assumes, under every form it is frail or fallacious ; that whether it endeavours to elevate the being by the use of mere human and earthly means, or by connecting it with its Maker through the medium of the imagination and the sense, its efforts are equally impotent ; that he who desires so to elevate himself must have recourse to Scripture alone, and the moral improvement of the being which it directs, as the sure and only method of enlarging his intellect, and ameliorating his condition. But these are lessons for all ; there are others applicable to peculiar pursuits and conditions. The student in divinity may learn from the errors which this sketch of the modern German theology presents, that if he assumes any arbitrary theory for the interpretation of Scripture, no extent and no depth of learning will save him from falling



into the wildest error. The philosopher may learn, that if he choose to form any theory of the Christian system, he must philosophize with the Bible in his hand, and verify every step by a recourse to Scripture. And the man of science may learn, too, that the principles which he applies in other cases are inapplicable here,—that there is nothing to discover in revelation; that the province of the human understanding with respect to Scripture is, to believe and to obey it.” (Pages 102, 103.)

Notwithstanding the defects in this volume, to which we have adverted, the author has, by its publication, rendered an important service to the cause of Protestant Christianity. The copious Appendix, in which he has verified the charges preferred against many of the Lutheran Divines, will be read with amazement and horror by those who were not previously acquainted with the German apostasy, and whose minds have been accustomed to regard the Scriptures with that sanctity and reverence to which they are entitled as a revelation from God.

## REVIEW V.

*Lectures on the Essentials of Religion, personal, domestic, and social,*  
by Henry Forster Burder, M.A., Author of *Lectures on the Plea-*  
*sures of Religion.* 8vo. 1825.

THAT there may be much interest felt in religion, much zeal displayed for its honour and influence, which is not directed principally and eminently to its essentials, is a serious truth, to which the religious history of mankind bears too indisputable a testimony. This delusion may even be carried further: There may be great zeal for the essentials of religion themselves, when considered doctrinally only, or when regarded practically with respect to others; when their application to ourselves, to our own conviction, correction, and habitual guidance, is little thought of. In the order of theological writings, the books which exhibit and guard the truth of the Gospel stand first in importance; those which apply it, second. Without entering into the question of the relative value of each, we may observe, that the relation in which one stands to the other is an essential one, if religion is to be understood as any thing more than a name. It is the relation of the plans and measurements of the architect to the building to be erected. Doctrinal truth is the rule by which practice works; and as no building can be erected without a plan, so plans are the mere sports of fancy, of no more value than the paper on which they are traced, if not carried into execution. To spend life in adjusting, admiring, or criticising the plan, without proceeding to the work, or persevering in it, is, alas! the fault of many, and, more or less, the temptation of all; and we are, therefore, happy to see another publication added to the many excellent and powerful works on practical divinity in which our language happily abounds, designed to carry the truth, as it stands in the revelation of God, into the convic-

tions of the heart, and from thence into the various branches of holy action, and habitual self-denial.

A large portion of this well-written and very useful work is occupied by what is, in systematic language, comprised under the head of "morals;" the government of the desires, temper, tongue, and conduct. With respect to the last, the domestic and social duties have a large space, and are well and clearly stated, and enforced with great earnestness, and in a persuasive and influential spirit. This is not, however, a book of heathen ethics, like too many written by Christian authors; nor yet of Christian ethics, taken without acknowledgment from the Bible, and enforced upon that lower order of principles and motives, beyond which those could not go, who had not the light of the inspired records. It is, indeed, a monstrous thing in the literature of a Christian nation, that we have books upon books on the nature and rationale of morality, dissertation upon dissertation on the principle of moral obligation, without any reference to the Scriptures; and written, too, not by the proud reasoner, who rejects the very revelation from which he himself has derived every sound and useful opinion for which he obtains credit, but by those who profess to acknowledge and respect it. This has arisen from erecting morality into a distinct science; separating it from religion, and from the Scriptures, which are its only sources; giving to it its Professor's Chairs, and translating it into the province of philosophy. We certainly do not mean to say, that philosophy has no place in morality. When it is understood as that which classes and disposes things into order; as that which investigates the reasons of things, and refers them to those great first principles which, though out of the reach of undisciplined and unreflecting minds, do, when brought out by more inquisitive and generalizing intellects, flash with conviction on understandings of every order; it has an important place in moral inquiries and discussions. The principles only of morality are often stated in Scripture, and need leading out into their variety of application. One class of duties is sometimes enjoined there, which have their affinities with others; and it is useful to trace the relation. And even

when duties are stated in Scripture in that beautiful detail which they so often exhibit, in the passive virtues which sustain ; the active affections which range into paths of utility, and scatter benedictions and benefits all around them ; the tenderness which sympathizes ; the temperance which restrains ; the purity which hallows and refines domestic and social intercourse ; the beneficence which mitigates the common afflictions of life ; and the lofty and stern justice which, on the large stage of a national arena, carries on its oppressive and unyielding warfare against every species of wrong and injustice ;—it is a delightful and, when properly conducted, a most instructive employment of true and piercing philosophy, to track up all these to the fountain-head of that wisdom and goodness from which they emanated, and to unveil the reasons of which they are the results. That they have all their reasons in the divine mind, we are sure ; and that these reasons rest upon the very elements of a rational and accountable nature,—upon the society which God has established between all intelligent creatures, and the relations they bear to himself,—is equally obvious ; or they would rather be temporary expedients than permanent rules ; a doctrine for which no one will contend. The original reasons of their enactment must be influential on every well-constituted mind, in proportion as they are discovered ; and the frequent manifestations of them, which so often incidentally appear in Scripture, will seldom fail to carry the devout, the truly Christian, philosopher far in his inquiries. What he gains of enlarged views by such meditations is most valuable to himself ; and when he pens them for others, he becomes entitled to their gratitude.

We advocate thus the use of philosophy in morals ; but there never was a vainer delusion than what is called moral philosophy, when separated from religion and the holy Scriptures. It leaves the true ground of obligation, the will of God, in quest of some arbitrary principle ; such as the eternal fitness of things, an instinctive moral sense, or general utility. It makes this principle, when selected, the rule of its casuistry ; and converts morality, in consequence, into matter

of opinion or of taste. It is necessarily forgetful of man's corrupt nature, and his need of supernatural renewal ; and it either lowers the standard to man's weakness and disinclinations, or presents to us a theory, goodly and beautiful, it may be, but like a temple on a mountain of ice, all radiant with the direct rays of an open sky, and coloured with the reflected hues of the glacier, but unapproached and unapproachable. It is still more mischievous : It changes the very character of many virtues, by depriving them of their vital principle of love to God ; and abridges the range and intensity of their exercise, by substituting a lower motive than that which is supplied by the Scriptures. We have been led to these remarks, because we are old-fashioned enough to feel satisfaction at the connexion of all the duties of which the excellent author has given, in the latter part of the book, so just and attractive a display, with their only originating principles, and to see them inseparably linked with repentance, faith, and holiness ; with which doctrines the book sets out, and which form the subject of the first six Lectures. In a word, the author evidently thinks, and we fully agree with him, that to be a moralist, in the true sense, a man must be a Christian ; and that he can only become a Christian through repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. It is thus that the tree is made good, and then brings forth its good fruit.

Separate from this, the exhibition of the most perfect morality can go but to one of two ends : Either it condemns and discourages as an exhibition of perfect law, in which there is no abatement in the demands made upon obedience, and thus it leads to despair, and to the corrupting notion, that virtue exists only as an impracticable theory,—a view of the case which operates perhaps more extensively, among those who are not taught from the Gospel where their strength lies, than some are aware of ; or it teaches, that the rules thus perfectly drawn out are only obligatory so far as human ability extends ; in which opinion there is always a plentiful allowance made for human weakness, because the party to be controlled and regulated is made the sole judge of his

own moral capability. This is, perhaps, the more general error.

Such are two of the practical effects of disjoining morals from the religion of the New Testament ; but there is yet another, which is found among those whose practice makes the nearest approaches to the rule ; as far, at least, as the man is visible. It is, that by giving up the religious source of morality, the religious character of all actions, however externally excellent, is rendered impossible ; in other words, they can have no relation to God. They are not done with him or for him ; and they become the acts of man in his social relations only to his fellows, and to society at large ; and not his acts as a creature accountable to God, and bound to refer all things to his will, and to seek his approbation. There is in them, in fact, no conscience ; for let a thing be done or omitted, because of its “ fitness or unfitness to the nature of things ; ” then the principle of the action is, a sense of proportion and adjustment to a general system : Or let it be done because of its agreement with the moral sense ; the principle of the action is, then, compliance with nature, and has in it the same kind of virtue as when a person abstains from intemperance to avoid the consequent disturbance of the head and stomach : Or let it be done on the ground of general utility ; then the principle is selfishness ; as every man is bound, by his own permanent interests, to promote what is, upon the whole, beneficial to the society in which he moves, and with which he has a common interest. What a sorrowful exclusion of all consideration of God is here, and of the noblest and most elevating principles and motives of human action ! This view of the case may well endear to us that blessed Gospel which so directly and so effectually secures, at once, the true principle and the elevated practice of all human virtues by its own simple process ; so often hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed only to babes, to the simple and teachable ; and which is expressed so concisely, and with so much weight of phrase, in the words of St. Paul : “ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin,

condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

This is a line of observation into which, indeed, the character of this volume does not immediately conduct us. The object of the author is, evidently, rather to enforce Christian morals, in their variety and perfectness, upon those who hold evangelical doctrines, than evangelical doctrine upon the theoretic moralist. It is, however, interesting to remark, how perfectly the "truth as it is in Jesus" saves the fully-obedient disciple from the path of death, which lies on either side, and girds upon him the armour of righteousness "on the right hand and on the left;" how impossible it is, that a man should be justified by faith, without being regenerated; and, being "dead to sin," that he should "continue any longer therein." This is the guard on the one hand; and on the other it is, that, in order that we may not continue in sin, there must be a spiritual dying to it; which can only be effected by that cross of Christ by which St. Paul was crucified to the world, and the world to him. The mere moralist is told, that no branch "can bring forth fruit of itself;" and the Antinomian, that every branch, though "in" Christ, "not bearing fruit, shall be taken away." Such is the clear and safe course in which the author of these Lectures conducts his readers: And if the bearing of his volume is more powerful against the corrupted and corrupting solifidian heresy, there is a sufficient reason for it in the greater danger of this error which surrounds those who are accustomed to attend an enlightened ministry; and in the more aggravated punishment to which pretenders to the love of Christ, but practical deniers of him, are liable: The pretence heightens the guilt: *Simula æquitas est duplex iniquitas.*

From the practical Lectures, on the government of the thoughts, the desires, the temper, the tongue, and conduct, and those on domestic and social religion, in which all these subjects are forcibly and often elegantly exhibited, we wish that we had room for extracts. We may, at another time, probably make use of a part of one of the Lectures separately;

but the very respect we have for this useful work obliges us to make a few remarks upon its statements of doctrine. To these we must take some exceptions. It is from repentance, and faith, and regeneration, that the author very properly brings all the vitality which is to animate his body of morals ; and it is the more important that this work of God in the heart, resulting in all the habits and acts of the new man, should be clearly comprehended by his readers. He has wisely freed himself, in many respects, from the trammels of systematic, and more especially of metaphysical, Divines, but we think that he has not, in every instance, seized the scriptural view with exactitude. This is, however, rather the fault of the author's theological system, which, though not made prominent, it is easy to perceive, is that of moderate Calvinism. The peculiarities of that system are not obtruded in the work, so as to prevent any person of very different views on those points from reading it with edification and pleasure, or, indeed, from placing it beside those companions of his closet, those books of experimental and practical religion which so much tend, when well selected, to preserve alive the ardour of the spirit, and to influence the temper and the life. Such a place it is well worthy of filling ; but in the particulars to which we refer, it serves to show, that in those points in which we have the greatest accordance with many of our Calvinistic brethren, even on repentance, justification, and the office of faith in justification, there are yet some considerable differences, at least in the mode of stating these great truths, between us. We advert to these discrepancies, not for the sake of invidious comparison, but for the purpose of keeping our readers in the full view of that more simple and, as we think, more scriptural mode of exhibiting these doctrines,—a mode, too, more conformable to the experience of all who have gone through these preparatory stages into the liberty of the sons of God,—which we have received from the writings of Mr. Wesley. The only instance, however, which our limits will allow us to select, is the author's description of the nature of repentance ; which is made to consist in retrospection, conviction, contrition, confession, and conversion. To



the last particular there could be no objection, were its sense confined to what, indeed, it most frequently signifies in Scripture,—the turning of the soul to God, in order to seek him. In its larger theological sense, it is made to comprise the renewal of the heart ; and is indiscriminately expressed by regeneration or sanctification. In this view it is made a constituent part of repentance by the author. “ There belongs,” he observes, “ to the repentance required of the sinner, conversion, or that entire change of character which is indicated by a correspondent change of conduct.” In the subsequent Lecture we are told, that, “ with the exercise of repentance, salvation is invariably connected ;” and that “ it has for the present life the promise of forgiveness ; and for the world to come, the assurance of eternal salvation.” This is probably quite in conformity with the views of the compilers of the Assembly’s Catechism ; who describe repentance to be “ a saving grace.” A grace it is, a grace of the Holy Spirit, and remotely connected with salvation ; but that it has that direct and immediate connexion with salvation which is stated by the above and other passages in these Lectures, is not supported by the scriptures adduced to sustain it. True repentance is indeed “ repentance unto life ;” but it is not itself life, in which pardon, conversion, in the sense of regeneration, and salvation, are all included. It is a step in progress to life ; and it is a necessary step ; life cannot be attained without it : But it is a step which leads on to another ; even faith, or trust, in Christ ; to which the promise of life is immediately given. If this were not so ; if, indeed, repentance had the promise of forgiveness ; if the connexion between that and pardon were so immediate as is here represented ; then all who repent would be pardoned, and the evidence of repentance would be the evidence of justification. But this is opposed to the nature of the thing ; for, as the author has stated it truly, conviction is an essential part of repentance ; **but** of what is a repentant man convinced ? Not merely of the fact of having sinned, but of the danger he has incurred. The very ground of his distress is, that he has incurred the penalty of sin, that he is condemned, that he is under wrath.

With whatever other emotions this may be accompanied ; whether it be deepened by fear, or lightened by hope ; in every awakened penitent mind, the sense of danger is present, or why should he ask, “ What must I do to be saved ? ” and why be directed to “ believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” that he may be saved ? Either, therefore, we must deny all distinction between a state of repentance, and a state of justification, which the author certainly does not intend ; or we must not consider repentance a saving grace in any such sense as faith is a saving grace ; and must allow, that no man, though truly penitent, is therefore in a state of salvation ; and that repentance is simply a state of mind in which a man, being convinced of his sinfulness and danger, flies to God through Christ, in order that he may obtain that deliverance and forgiveness which he cannot even then receive, but by the additional exercise of faith, to which only the promise of salvation is immediately made.

The notion, too, that conversion, in any other sense than that of the turning of a consciously guilty, polluted, and condemned sinner to God, is a concomitant of repentance, is equally erroneous ; for conversion, in the sense of “ an entire change of character and conduct,” is regeneration, the new creature ; and this, though distinct from justification, is, in Scripture, made concurrent with it, but is never said to precede it. “ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature ; ” “ there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Now, in a state of repentance, a man is painfully convinced that he is not in Christ ; this is the grand reason of his sorrow and fear. How, then, if he be not in Christ, can he be a new creature ? In him there is condemnation. How, then, can he “ walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” when this moral state, as a habit arising from a renewed principle, is expressly attributed to those who, being in Christ, have no condemnation ? The passages which teach the same doctrine might be multiplied, were these less explicit. The fallacy lies in confounding a change, with an entire change ; the preparatory, with the saving, work of God in the heart. A change there is, from

darkness to light, from carelessness to restless anxiety, from love of sin to hatred of sin as the source of misery and danger; "fruits meet for repentance," where there is opportunity, are brought forth; but then all this time the bondage to sin is felt and deplored, and deliverance from it is earnestly sought as a future good: Nor are any of the external fruits of repentance, in a proper sense, good works, for they do not spring from love to God,—an emotion which can have no place in the heart until it is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, and till we taste the joys of pardoning mercy. "We love him because he first loved us." A perception of his love to us is the source of our love to him; and this we cannot have so long as his wrath abideth upon us.

Satisfied, however, as we are of the correctness of these views, we do not contend for them merely for the sake of theological precision. They have the most important practical bearing. Tell a newly-awakened man, that repentance must precede faith; and that repentance includes conversion, in the sense of "an entire change of character and conduct;" what is the work upon which you put him? At what a distance do you throw his hope of pardon? and where has faith any place in this representation? True, it comes in in the next Lecture; but in that before him he is told, "It cannot admit of a doubt, that every sinner who truly repents, attains the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. He is then blessed indeed! He enters on the enjoyment of the purest and most permanent delight; he shall never come into condemnation," &c. If this be so, what has he to do with justifying faith, and with the next Lecture which contains an account of it? All he wants is placed before him in this. Pardon, he is told, is immediately connected with repentance, with all its blessedness and security. His business, therefore, is to repent; that is, to become a new creature; and then pardon follows, independently (for such is the necessary inference) of justifying faith. How long this process is to be going on before "this entire change of character and conduct," this conversion, is reached, no one can tell;

for there is no certain standard by which it can be determined ; perhaps through life : Certainly we should say through life, if the faith which unites us to Christ, and which becomes the source of all spiritual life and power at the moment it justifies, is not brought in. And after all that may be said, this justification by repentance, or conversion, is justification, if not by the merit of works, yet by works instrumentally. How clear and disembarassed, on the other hand, is the doctrine which invites every broken spirit at once to fly to the exhibited propitiation, and to believe in Christ, that he may now be saved from the guilt and power of sin ! How different is the language of the excellent author himself when he comes to treat of faith, and frees himself from the obscurity which the Assembly's Catechism has thrown around the nature of evangelical repentance, when it teaches it to be " a saving grace ! " " Faith," says the third Lecture, " in the Gospel is a duty at this moment incumbent on every one of us." " O, why will ye die with the way of life eternal full in view ? Why will you not plead the promise, and, relying upon its fulfilment, come without delay to Christ, that you may be saved ? He died for the ungodly. Trust in his propitiation, in his righteousness, in his love, in his promise, and you are safe. You may be safe to-day ; you may be delivered from condemnation this very hour. Lose not another moment. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved."

This is clear light ; and although we have made the above remarks on the description given of repentance, the book abounds with passages equally just and forcible. With the few exceptions arising out of the difference of our systems, we very cordially recommend it as a beautiful and just exhibition of Christianity in its principle and moral influence. On the subject of faith, the author, we think, sometimes leans too much to the philosophical manner in which it has been stated by Mr. Erskine, in his eloquent, but in some points misleading, treatise on that subject. To this work itself, however, we propose, at some future period, to call the attention of our readers. The philosophy of religion often very insensibly becomes the religion of philosophy ; and there lies the danger.

## REVIEW VI.

*An Essay on Faith. By Thomas Erskine, Esq., Advocate. Third Edition. Pp. 155.*

WE perused this Essay at its first appearance, having been attracted to it by a former work of the author, on the internal evidence of Christianity; which is, in many respects, a vigorous and useful performance. We then intended to offer some remarks upon the views which Mr. Erskine has taken of a subject of the first importance to mankind, and which we did not think satisfactorily discussed in this Essay; but other matters pressed upon our attention, and prevented the fulfilment of our design. On a recent and second reading of the book, it has appeared to us not too late to bring it before our readers; and especially as we have reason to believe that it is still in much favour among many persons professing evangelical views of religion, and has been thought ingeniously to harmonize the scriptural doctrine of faith with reason and philosophy. We have great respect for the good intentions of the author: He has applied a well-endowed and vigorous mind to the enforcement, as well as to the illustration, of several important points of Christian doctrine and experience; and has in many respects written usefully. We have not this view of the leading discussion contained in this Essay. It is false, because unscriptural, in its principle; and mistakes on such a subject as “the faith whereof cometh salvation” cannot but be mischievous.

As the object of the author appears to have been to give the rationale of the faith required by the Gospel as a condition of salvation, in order to meet the philosophers he thus sacrifices the Divines —

“Theological writers have distinguished and described different kinds of faith, as speculative and practical,—historical, saving, and realizing faith. It would be of little conse-

quence what names we gave to faith, or to any thing else, provided these names did not interfere with the distinctness of our ideas of the things to which they are attached ; but as we must be sensible that they do very much interfere with these ideas, we ought to be on our guard against any false impressions which may be received from an incorrect use of them. Is it not evident that this way of speaking has a natural tendency to draw the attention away from the thing to be believed, and to engage it in a fruitless examination of the mental operation of believing ? And, accordingly, is it not true, that we see and hear of more anxiety amongst religious people, about their faith being of the right kind, than about their believing the right things ? A sincere man, who has never questioned the divine authority of the Scripture, and who can converse and reason well on its doctrines, yet finds, perhaps, that the state of his mind and the tenor of his life do not agree with the Scripture rule. He is very sensible that there is an error somewhere ; but instead of suspecting that there is something in the very essentials of Christian doctrine which he has never yet understood thoroughly, the probability is, that he and his advisers, if he ask advice, come to the conclusion, that his faith is of a wrong kind, that it is speculative or historical, and not true saving faith. Of course, this conclusion sends him, not to the study of the Bible, but to the investigation of his own feelings, or rather, of the laws of his own mind. He leaves that truth which God has revealed and blessed as the medicine of our natures, and bewilders himself in a metaphysical labyrinth." (Pages 13, 14.)

We cannot say that we are disposed to part with the distinctions referred to so readily ; although we would lay much less stress on the terms in which they are conveyed. We are not to treat theology as we would the sciences, which depend for their improvement upon the advancement of the human intellect, and the enlargement of the sphere of human observation. For ages it has been studied in its own inspired records with the most intense application, aided by profound learning and piety ; and in its leading and practical branches, at least, it has left nothing to be discovered by moderns. The dis-

tinctions which we find generally agreed upon, when such subjects are before them, by the Divines of the best ages of the church, and, in this case, of almost all particular churches, are the result of their collective investigations ; and are not to be puffed away by a breath, or routed by an assertion : And whether the phrases “ speculative ” and “ practical,” “ historical,” “ saving,” and “ realizing faith,” please or not, and whether they can be substituted by others more expressive of the ideas they were designed to convey, the distinctions themselves are eternal as the scriptural doctrine on which they are founded.

True it is, that, if Mr. Erskine’s principle be correct, such distinctions have no foundation in reality ; since he denies any thing to be faith, but that which actually saves ; but he ought to have established this principle with more care and success, and not have assumed, that these distinctions convey false impressions, for scarcely a better reason than that they will not accord with his own theory. Faith, with him, is believing “ right things ; ” and does not admit of kinds : We hold, that these, taken together, constitute the truth ; that Christian faith consists in believing Christian doctrines, and in so believing them as it has prescribed ; and that these, so far from being identical, may be, not only separated, but opposed to each other. Mr. Erskine attempts to parry off St. James’s testimony, which he obviously feels to be somewhat irreconcilable with his views ; but he has ill succeeded in his attempt to force upon the Apostle’s words a novel interpretation. It cannot be denied, that St. James speaks of a “ dead ” faith ; and that he opposes to this a faith which is not dead. Here, then, we have an Apostle distributing faith into two kinds,—the faith, too, of Christians,—of persons professing to believe the doctrines of Christ, or, as Mr. Erskine would say, “ right things ; ” and St. James’s living faith, and dead faith, terms not differing in import from the speculative and saving faith of systematic Divines, must stand, therefore, as an inspired refutation of the author’s notion. Not so, says Mr. Erskine ; for when the Apostle calls faith dead, he denies its existence altogether. “ We deny the existence of benevolence, when

fair words are given instead of good offices ; even so we may deny the existence of faith, when it produces no fruit, and merely vents itself in professions." We, indeed, deny the existence of living faith, in this case ; but the Apostle affirms the existence of a faith which is dead. We are told, in such a case, that "faith is departed ; it is no more ; it is dead." But Mr. Erskine is misled by his similitude. The Apostle does not tell us that he is speaking of a faith which had once been alive ; and which, therefore, being now dead, might be said to be no more. For any thing that appears to the contrary, he is speaking of a faith which had never been alive ; of the faith of persons who had never done more than believe the doctrines of Christianity without becoming subjects of their saving efficacy ; and as the faith of these persons had never died, it could not, by dying, according to the author's notion, pass out of existence. The author admits "there is a carcass to be seen ; but the spirit is gone." But a carcass is an entity ; and this entity St. James calls dead faith, and not non-existent faith. That St. James admitted that the persons he reproves had faith, is plain from his saying, "Thou believest that there is one God. Thou doest well : The devils also believe and tremble." "This means," says Mr. Erskine, "that the mere belief of the unity of the Godhead, however important when connected with other truths, cannot of itself make a man either better or happier." This is very true ; but nothing to the purpose, unless St. James had been discoursing on the necessity of believing a certain number of truths, in order to constitute a true faith. It is clear that he hints at no such notion ; and that he does not find fault with the faith which he characterizes as dead, because it did not extend beyond the unity of God, but because it wanted the quality of life. It was not, in kind, that which the Gospel requires. It did, in point of fact, in the persons to whom St. James wrote, go beyond the unity of God, even into the various parts of Christian doctrine ; and yet was as inefficacious as the faith, the real faith, of devils.

Mr. Erskine, having thus stumbled upon the threshold, very innocently objurgates those spiritual advisers who inquire into



the nature of the faith of those who consult them, for sending the applicants, not to study the Bible, but to investigate their feelings, "or, rather, the laws of their own mind," so as to "bewilder them in a metaphysical labyrinth." We know no spiritual advisers who are quite so absurd as this; and the case exists in Mr. Erskine's imagination. But of this we are sure, that if men are sent "to study the Bible," they must be directed, not merely to what they are to believe, but to the manner of believing it. They must be asked, whether their faith, like that of Noah, moves them by fear; or, like that of Abel, includes a trust in the one-appointed sacrifice for sin; or, like that of Abraham, can lead them forth to go, they know not whither, through the uncertain scenes of future life, with calm and settled reliance upon the guiding wisdom and protecting presence of God. They must be asked, whether their faith in Christ is followed by pardon, comfort, and sanctity; and if they give not satisfactory answers, they must be taught, if taught scripturally, not merely that there are more truths to be believed, but that they need a faith which is not of themselves, but is the gift of God, as well as the salvation of which it is the condition.

Our author's view of faith may be collected from the following passages:—

"A true faith does not properly refer to the mode of believing, but to the object believed. It means the belief of a true thing." (Page 23.)

"To have faith in a thing, to believe a thing, and to understand a thing as a truth, are expressions of the same import. No man can be properly said to believe any thing which is addressed to his thinking faculty, if he does not understand it.

"Let us suppose a Chinese, who can speak no language but his own, brought before an English jury as a witness. Let him bring with him certificates and testimonials of character which place his truth and integrity above all suspicion. There is not a doubt entertained of him. But he gives his evidence in his own language. I ask, Does any one juryman believe him? Certainly not; it is absolutely impossible;

nobody understands a word that he utters. If, during the course of the evidence, the jury were asked whether or not they believed what he was telling them, would they not smile at the question? And yet they know that it is truth. They understand that the witness is an honest man, and they believe as far as they understand, but they can believe no further. An interpreter is brought; he translates the evidence: Now the jury understand it, and their belief accompanies their understanding. If one of the jury had understood Chinese, the difference between his belief and that of the rest would have been accurately measured by the difference of their understandings. They all heard the same sounds, and saw the same motions, but there was only one of them to whom these symbols conveyed any meaning. Now the meaning was the thing of importance to be believed; and the proof of the man's integrity was of consequence merely on account of the authority which it gave to his meaning." (Pages 26, 27.)

"Are there not many who would be astonished and hurt if their Christianity were doubted, who evidently attach as little meaning to the words, judgment, eternity, and justification by faith in Christ, as those men did to the Chinese vocables? Can these be said to believe? Are there not many who can speak and reason orthodoxly and logically on the doctrines of the Gospel, and yet do not understand the urgency of these doctrines in application to their own souls? These do not believe the meaning of the Gospel, surely. And are there not many who, mistaking the whole scope of the Bible, find in it what is not there, a plan of justification, in which man performs some part, if not the whole, in the work of redemption; or see in it merely a list and a description of duties, by the performance of which a man may recommend himself to the favour of God? Those who believe this, believe their own vain imagination, and not the Gospel. A man who is honest in his belief of that which he professes to believe, is certainly free from the charge of deceit and hypocrisy; but his honesty will not convert a lie into truth: It cannot make that good news which is not good news; it cannot change the import of the Bible, or the will of God. 'Under-

standest thou what thou readest ?' was Philip's question to the eunuch ; and it is a question which each reader of the Bible should put most jealously to himself ; for, as it is said in the parable of the sower, ' When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.' " (Pages 30—32.)

On some minor points, to which objections might be raised, we need not dwell. All that we infer from these quotations is, that in order to believe the Gospel, we must understand the meaning of the Gospel. The point to which this conducts us is the main consideration ; and this is, that where the meaning of the Gospel is understood and credited, there is true faith ; that is, the faith which justifies and saves. Here we are at issue with Mr. Erskine. For as, by believing, he intends nothing more than giving credit to the Gospel understood and apprehended in its meaning, his conclusion must be rejected upon the authority both of experience and of the Scripture. Of experience ; for every man may be conscious that he fully credits many truths of the Gospel, the meaning of which he so comprehends as to be inwardly condemned and smitten with remorse, that he is not influenced by them in proportion to the meaning he attaches to them, and the real belief he has in them. Here, indeed, Mr. Erskine may turn upon us and say, that such a man is not fully instructed in the meaning of the whole Gospel. But there are many real believers who are not instructed in the meaning of the whole Gospel, and few, if any, who are. It is enough that those leading truths are understood which relate to our fallen condition, guilt, and danger ; the method of our salvation by Christ ; the operations of the Holy Spirit ; and practical holiness ;—truths few in number, and which the simple and unlearned may be brought to apprehend. In these truths we are sure that many persons are instructed, who are not effectually influenced by them : And that they believe them upon a generally right apprehension of their import, is also most certain from that frequent inward conviction of guilt and danger which they feel ; although they succeed in stifling it, and thus sin against their light, and, con-

sequently, their faith ; which faith is, manifestly, not saving. Thus experience contradicts this notion ; for there could be no self-condemnation, no sinning or making light of the Gospel against conviction, if there were not sincere faith in it ; and yet this faith has no saving efficacy. The Scripture also is against the hypothesis, that saving faith is mere belief, or the crediting of the doctrines of the Gospel upon understanding them ; for it superadds to this belief, in its account of saving faith, the quality also of personal trust,—a point to which we shall again recur. But it is first necessary to notice the manner in which Mr. Erskine elevates mere belief into saving faith.

The theory of the author is one which, we may venture to say, is equally opposed to the testimony of God in his word, and also to sound philosophy, although he affects to array it in a philosophic garb. It is, that faith, or belief of the truth, does, by a natural process, grounded upon the manner in which God has constituted our nature, produce all the moral effects ascribed to it in the Gospel. Let the following extract be taken for our example :—

“ Now, there is a meaning in the Gospel, and there is declared in it the system of God’s dealings with men. This meaning and this system must be understood before we can believe the Gospel. We are not called on to believe the Bible merely that we may give a proof of our willingness to submit in all things to God’s authority, but that we may be influenced by the objects of our belief. When the Apostle of the Gentiles gives a reason why he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, he does not say, because it is a message from the King of kings ; he does not found its importance simply on the authority of the promulgator of it, but in a great measure on its own intrinsic and intelligible value : ‘ For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth.’ (Rom. i. 16.) Salvation here signifies healing, or deliverance, not from the condemnation, but from the influence, of sin. His reason for not being ashamed of this Gospel then was, because it was the mighty instrument which God had prepared for healing the spiritual diseases of men. The great import-

ance of the object to be attained by the publication of the Gospel invested it with its high dignity. But he does not leave his Roman disciples here ; he explains to them how this great object is attained ; he tells them what it is in the Gospel which produces this effect ; ‘ for,’ continues he, in the seventeenth verse, ‘ herein is revealed God’s plan of justification by faith.’ Righteousness, through this Epistle, almost without exception, signifies the mercy of God manifested in pardoning sinners for the sake of the atonement of Christ. He is afterwards at much pains to demonstrate to them, that the belief of this mercy has, from the very nature of man, that healing influence which he had ascribed to it. I may remark here, that the passage of Malachi, in which the Messiah is predicted under the figure of the Sun of Righteousness, or forgiving mercy, bears a striking resemblance, in meaning, to the verses which have been quoted from the Epistle to the Romans. The Apostle represents justification, or the remission of sins, as the prominent feature and characteristic of the Gospel, and to this he ascribes the whole of its healing or salutary power ; and the Prophet’s eye, in like manner, is caught by the absorbing glory and brilliancy of this plan of redemption. He sees from afar a new manifestation of the divine character rising on the dark world ; many and diversified are the high attributes of that character ; but as the different rays of the natural light, when combined, appear but one brightness, so the many rays of that spiritual light, when combined, appear but one Sun of mercy ; and the beams which this Sun shoots forth, are pardons which heal the hearts they enter.

“ In order, then, to the believing of the Gospel, it is necessary that the plan of justification by faith should be understood ; because this is the prominent feature of the Gospel, and because the benefits bestowed by the Gospel are communicated to the soul through the knowledge of this doctrine.” (Pages 33—36.)

We have here bad criticism, and as bad divinity. Where did the author learn that “ salvation,” in Rom. i. 16, means moral healing, and that previously, and not deliverance from the condemnation of sin ? Not, certainly, from the original

word, or from its general use. And how will he establish it, that to the doctrine of remission of sins, the whole of the healing or salutary power of the Gospel is ascribed by the Apostle? The salvation spoken of is deliverance from danger by pardon; and the healing power of the Gospel is to be attributed, not to sentiment, the grand error of the author; not to the supposed moral efficacy of the knowledge of facts, such as the love of God to man, by meditating on which the heart is to be warmed into indignant feelings against sin, and into the love of holiness; but to the mighty working of God in the heart by his Holy Spirit, without whose aid all knowledge, all mere belief, is fruitless, and all sentiment mere rhetoric and poetry; the crackling of thorns under a pot; a blaze of straw, transient and powerless. The Apostle, indeed, connects the sanctifying influence of the Gospel with justification; but not as our author does. He who is pardoned receives the Holy Spirit, both as his Comforter and Sanctifier; but as distinct, although concomitant, acts of the same grace, received by faith. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." The faith of the Apostle did not bring him into this state by furnishing food for sentimental meditations; but by its taking hold of the grace and strength of his Saviour, by an act of simple trust. Of this we have nothing in this specious and misleading book.

But, for the author's philosophy of faith:—

"What is the difference between knowledge or understanding and faith? Our understanding of a thing means the conception which we have formed of it, or the impression which it has made on our mind, without any reference to its being a reality in nature independent of our thought, or a mere fiction of the imagination; and faith is a persuasion, accompanying these impressions, that the objects which produced them are realities in nature, independent of our thought or perception. This persuasion of reality accompanies all the different modes in which our knowledge is acquired, as well as the testimony

of others. When an object is presented to my eye, the impression which it makes upon me is accompanied by the persuasion, that the object which produced it is truly described by the impression which it has made, and that it is a reality independent of myself. When a proposition in mathematics is demonstrated to me, a persuasion accompanies my understanding of it, that these relations of quantities are fixed and unalterable, and altogether independent of my reasoning. When the generous or kind conduct of a friend meets my difficulties, my impression of the fact is accompanied by a persuasion of the reality of that generosity or kindness, as qualities existing in my friend's heart altogether independent of my thought or feeling on the subject. When I hear, through a channel which appears to me authentic, of some melancholy or some joyful event, there is an accompanying persuasion that there is a real cause for joy or sorrow.

“ Faith, then, is just an appendage to those faculties of the mind by which we receive impressions from external objects, whether they be material or immaterial. It stands at the entrances of the mind, as it were, and passes sentence on the authenticity of all information which goes in. Now, as faith is merely an appendage to another faculty, is it not evident that its existence and exercise, with regard to any particular object, must depend on the existence and exercise of that faculty to which the object is addressed? A man born blind has no impressions from light, and, therefore, he can have no faith with regard to such impressions. He has not the slightest conception of what is meant by a coloured body, and, therefore, he cannot believe in a coloured body. He may believe that bodies have a quality which he is incapable of perceiving, but what that quality is he does not know, and, therefore, cannot believe in it. Faith is the persuasion that the impression on the mind was produced by a real object. But if no impression is made upon the mind, what room is there for the exercise of belief? If he, like another blind man, has formed an idea that red is like the sound of a trumpet, the impression is a false one, and the belief appended to it is also false, that is, it is appended to a false impression. For faith

must always derive its character from the impression to which it is appended.

“ If the impression is correct, the faith is correct ; and if the impression is incorrect, the faith is incorrect. And when we are considering impressions as produced by objects supposed or known to be real, we may very properly explain faith to be the impression made on our minds by some such object.” (Pages 37—40.)

This, it must be confessed, is a curious account of faith. The author carefully avoids the simple distinction between belief, and trust or reliance ; and thus labours to show that mere belief must necessarily produce those effects by natural process, which in Scripture are attributed to the faith of reliance ; and to that, not at all through its natural operation, but as it is the performance of a condition on which the gift of pardon and that of the Holy Spirit are suspended. But let us look to the philosophy. First, the conception of a thing by the understanding, and the impression it makes upon the mind, are represented as the same thing ; then, faith is a persuasion that the objects producing this impression are real ; then, it is the persuasion that the object is truly described by the impression ; then, when a person hears of some melancholy or joyful event, it is a persuasion, not only that the corresponding impression answers to the event, but that there is a real cause for joy or sorrow ; then, faith is an appendage to those faculties of the mind by which we receive impressions ; and then comes the conclusion, that its existence and exercise must depend upon the existence and exercise of the faculty to which the object is addressed ; or, in other words, faith depends for existence and exercise upon the understanding, which forms these conceptions, or receives these impressions. “ If the impression is correct, the faith is correct,” and the contrary ; and then, to crown the whole, faith and these impressions are confounded ; “ for,” says Mr. Erskine, “ we may properly explain faith to be the impression made upon our mind by a supposed or real object.” We know not that we ever met with a more perfect specimen of mystification. In a few words we think we can express all that the author



meant so laboriously to convey :—When we understand a thing as a real object, we then believe it ; and our conception of it as a reality is the measure of our faith in it. Now we think it not worth a moment's time to affirm or deny the truth of so simple a proposition ; but when it is applied to the faith of the Gospel, we must look at it more carefully. Our author, therefore, proceeds :—

“ In order, then, to a full belief of the Gospel, there must be an impression or conception on our mind, representing every moral quality, and every truth contained and embodied in the facts of the Gospel history ; for the Gospel consists not in the facts, but in the meaning of the facts. We are not left to interpret the facts ourselves, but, along with the history of them, we have received the interpretation of them in the word of God. It is there written that ‘ God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ In order to understand and believe this, it is not enough to believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for sinners. We must receive impressions on our minds corresponding to the circumstances of our situation, which called for the interposition of divine compassion ; we are here described as perishing. We may have the general idea of perishing, in our minds, without fear or concern, and we may have the idea of others perishing without being much moved ; but it is impossible that a man can be impressed with the fact of his being himself in a perishing state, under a just condemnation of eternal misery, without much fear and concern. If, then, the Gospel implies that we are in this condition, and if the value of the deliverance which it proclaims rests on the truth of its statement, in this respect, we do not understand nor believe the Gospel, unless we have on our minds an impression corresponding to the fact, that this condition is our deserved fate.

“ We must, also, receive on our minds impressions corresponding to a deliverance from this state. This impression will be joyful ; for deliverance from misery means that which produces joy. If the Gospel contains tidings of deliverance for persons in our circumstances, we do not understand it,

unless there be on our minds an impression corresponding to these glad tidings.

“ If this interposition on our behalf proceeded from holy love, on the part of God, we cannot understand the nature of the Gospel, unless we know both what holiness and love mean ; and this we cannot know by mere description. We must have on our minds impressions corresponding to holiness and love, before we can believe in holy love.” (Pages 49—51.)

The substance of all this is, that no man can credit the declaration of his own perishing state, as made in the Gospel, without being alarmed into repentance ; nor its declaration of deliverance, without joy ; nor the doctrine of “ holy love on the part of God,” without becoming holy and loving. Unhappily, however, for the author, he forgets himself ; for he had but just said, “ By impression, I never mean the effect which an object understood produces on the mind ; I mean simply the conception which the mind forms of the object, independent of its influence upon the character.” Yet, in the same paragraph he affirms, “ It is impossible that a man can be impressed,” that is, as he before explains it, can have a simple intellectual conception, “ that he is in a perishing state, without much fear and concern ;” thereby taking the term “ impression” in its more popular and enlarged sense ; meaning thereby, the effect produced, in contradiction to himself, and in refutation of his own principle. Let us, then, allow that faith is measured by the conception of a thing in the understanding as real. What is it that produces the effect ? The intellectual impression, or conception, says the author, is one thing ; the effect is another. So we think ; but what, then, becomes of the theory ? and what produces the effect ? If Mr. Erskine say, the conception of the reality produces it, he contradicts himself ; if not, then even he must admit of some other cause.

Thus he halts in his theory ; and well he may ; since, if the mere crediting of the fact of our being in a perishing condition could produce repentance, he shuts out the office of Christ to give repentance, though that is expressly ascribed to him in

Scripture ; and he equally excludes the Holy Spirit. Again : If the mere belief of the doctrine of pardon can give Christian joy, then this joy is not the joy of actual personal pardon, but joy arising from a general declaration of pardon ; and if the love of God can arise from the crediting of his general love to us, then is there no need of the Holy Spirit to shed abroad the love of God in our hearts. All these conclusions the author would disclaim ; but does he not then see the folly of a theory, which could carry him to such fearful consequences, and make man the sole agent in producing his own repentance, joy, and holiness, by the instrumentality of a merely intellectual, or at most a sentimental, process ?

We have said that this scheme excludes the influences of the Holy Spirit. This is true as to the scheme ; but not as to the author, to whom we must do the justice to say, that he contends for the Spirit's agency ; and when not embarrassed by his hypothesis, he places it often in a striking light. In the following extract he connects that agency with his theory of the natural efficiency of impressions, or intellectual conceptions, corresponding with the object, to produce moral effects :—

“ The joy of the Gospel, though it may be at first sought and embraced in gratification of natural instinct, contains in it the principles of the Christian character. At first it may appear mere deliverance from misery ; and in this view it attracts the miserable ; but as the means by which this deliverance was effected are seen, its moral power develops itself, and that Spirit whose unfelt influence led them here for comfort opens the eyes of their understandings to discern the truth, and prepares their affections to receive it in the love of it.” (Page 61.)

Here we have another delectable specimen of this philosophico-evangelical Christianity. The glad tidings of deliverance produce joy, first, through “ natural instinct ;” which instinctive joy contains in it “ the principles of the Christian character.” What does that mean ? Then the Spirit's influence comes in to develop the moral power of the means which effected the deliverance by improving our under-

standing of it. In other words, religion, after all, is a natural process, only aided and quickened in its progress by supernatural agency. But this is further pursued. The author has shown us how religious joy is produced; namely, by the operation of glad tidings upon "natural instinct," improved and heightened by the clearer light which the Spirit throws upon the object contemplated. How, then, are love and holiness produced?

"When we perceive that the safety and happiness of our souls for ever rest upon the character of God as manifested in the cross of Christ, we must take delight in that manifestation, and in the character so manifested; and thus we learn to love them. When we see the faithfulness and justice of God, formerly so alarming to our guilty consciences, now, not merely smiling on us, but actually becoming the foundation of assured hope through the satisfaction of the Saviour's blood, we must delight in them; and this delight will teach us love. This love and this delight will grow more and more disinterested. The glory of God will be contemplated with a rapture unmixed with selfish thoughts. 'Thy lovingkindness is better than life,' says David, in the generous spirit of a child of God. Thy gifts are good, and worthy of thyself; but still that love which bestowed them is far dearer to my heart than they; without that love even thy gifts would appear poor to me. The love of God produces likeness to God; and thus the joy of the Lord is the strength of his people." (Page 62.)

The question, then, is, why, when we see these things, (whether by our own light, or the superadded light of the Spirit, it matters not to the argument,) we must delight in them, and must love them and their Author; and must become like him. Mr. Erskine refers this to a law of our nature. We are so constituted, that, when a subject is fully known in its import, meaning, and application, the effect must correspond. Our reply is, that this goes upon the ground, that the whole work of regeneration is produced by the agency of the understanding, or at most by the Holy Spirit operating upon the understanding, as our teacher. What then becomes of his quickening influence? How does he also work in us to **correct** the will; to elevate and sanctify our affections; in a

word, to regenerate our whole nature? All these effects are in Scripture attributed as much to his direct and immediate influence, as the illumination of our minds; and, if so, although he teaches,—and this is one of his primary operations,—he does not effect all the rest by the natural influence and impression of mere knowledge; but operates also upon the other corrupt powers of our nature, so as to make us new creatures. Mr. Erskine's theory would be much more plausible, if no evil had befallen our nature except ignorance; but the very powers on which truth must operate are diseased also; and unless they be cured, the understanding will be illuminated to as little effect, as the sun shines upon the diseased or sightless eye.

In matters which relate to this present life, men are more uniformly influenced by their knowledge, than in religion; a distinction which wholly escapes Mr. Erskine. And yet, even here, when their passions and appetites have influence, they often present pitiable examples of the powerlessness of the mere knowledge of the evil and miserable results of a course of action, to turn men from it. Mr. Erskine might very satisfactorily demonstrate to a person partially acquainted with mankind, that no man given to intemperate habits of drinking could persevere, if he could be made to understand all the consequences of those habits upon his health. His understanding would receive an impression corresponding to the whole case of disease, pain, and premature death; and, by the constitution of his nature, he must take the alarm, and abstain from the intoxicating draught. But all drunkards are not ignorant; all drunkards are not left without warning by their Physicians; many know the whole case before them, see the result, and tremble at it, and behold in their palsied hands, and decaying health, a sensible demonstration of the truth of slighted warnings, and yet slight them still. There is "a law in their members warring against the law of their minds," their intellect, their understanding; and that holds them in fetters, which all the rays of knowledge poured upon them through their judgment have not strength enough to dissolve. But the case is still stronger in matters of religion. That men

know, and do not; that all know more than they practise, is matter of universal observation and complaint. Man, therefore, wants more than knowledge; he wants power: And though knowledge may be power in philosophy, it is not in religion. The power he wants must come from God, not from himself; for this is the uniform doctrine of Scripture. The office of illumination is to show this to man; and to show him, at the same time, where his strength lies. In the Bible he then sees the promise of help; a promise is the object of faith; and when that is exercised, then he obtains the power he needs; not by the excitement of a latent native energy, operating, by means of his understanding, as a rubber upon glass, to bring out the secret electric fluid; but by the mighty working of the power of God; the same power which raised our Lord Jesus from the dead.

We may also further inquire, if moral effects necessarily follow from a right apprehension of moral truth, whether all moral truth is practically efficient in every degree in which it is known. If so, then how came the heathen philosophers, "who knew God," not to glorify him as God? How is it, that duty ever lags behind the knowledge of duty? How is it, that there are sins against conviction? But if it be said, "The whole of a system of moral truth must be known in all its parts, and in its full meaning, in order to its efficiency;" by what process will Mr. Erskine proceed to make a man a Christian? The subject he has to work upon has no love for truth; no love for holiness; but, on the contrary, he is full of enmity to both. Will he be Mr. Erskine's patient and docile disciple, unless these evils be first corrected? And if not, he must look out for another and independent process by which this enmity is to be cured. Granting, however, that his pupil is as teachable as he can wish; he must, it seems, learn a tolerably ample body of divinity, before he can have a "conception" of the whole Gospel, adequate to its meaning and import, or, in other words, before he can have a true faith; and the whole compass of this necessary doctrine must be learned before faith, and godly sorrow, and fear, and joy, and love, and holiness, can follow; for moral effects will **not**

follow, it seems, from a partial conception of truth. Till the moment, therefore, that this adequate conception or impression is attained, no effect follows; and as the transit from the last partial inefficacious conception of "the full meaning of the Gospel," to the first full and adequate conception of it, can be, in the nature of the theory, but the work of a moment, Mr. Erskine cannot object to the doctrine of sudden conversions. But, what is more, if the truth must be known as a whole, in order thus naturally and necessarily to work out its moral effects, then the passage from a state of entire impenitence, to such a degree of Christian maturity as consists in supreme delight in God, and love to him, and strict resemblance to him, can be but the work of a moment also. Still further, the moral effect of the discovery of the whole truth at once must be the moral effect of all its parts; so that, in this wondrous sudden conversion, all the different impressions must be simultaneous; and at one and the same time men must repent, and believe; fear, and be delivered from fear; sorrow, and rejoice; love God, and mourn and confess their enmity to him; be convinced that they are under wrath, and yet that there is to them no condemnation; feel total corruption, and groan under its bondage, and yet be like God; in a word, they will be at once degenerate and regenerate. A most marvellous conversion, truly! Let Mr. Erskine take which side of the alternative he chooses; each is fatal to his theory. If moral effects must follow from an adequate conception of a part of the truth of the Gospel, by natural process, through the law and constitution of nature, then the Heathen who "knew God" so adequately as to glorify him, as the Apostle's argument shows, had not moral causes stood in the way, (which constituted their sin,) must have glorified him as God; and every man must be the better by every thing in religion of which he has an adequate conception; which cannot be reconciled either to experience, or to the Apostle's words, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." If, on the other hand, no effects can follow until the whole system be adequately apprehended in its full meaning and import, then will follow the absurdities above stated.

We have said enough, we think, to show the unsoundness of the author's leading principle. Let us then see how he connects faith, according to his view of that grace, with justification :—

“ This leads us to consider the connexion between faith and justification. How, and why, are these two things connected ? What is the meaning of such a sentence as this,— ‘ A man is justified by faith without works ? ’ In such affirmations, the expression, ‘ by faith,’ means simply the gratuitousness of the gift of pardon. Paul says, ‘ Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace,’ or free mercy. (Rom. iv. 16.) Faith is here directly contrasted with works or merits, as it is also in all passages where justification is the subject. We have frequent examples in the Bible of the Gospel being stated without any mention of faith : Thus, ‘ It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ (1 Tim. i. 15 ; as also 1 John v. 11 ; Luke xix. 10.) These texts point to the will of God alone as the source of mercy, without making the slightest reference to any quality in man, except his need. Faith, then, does not create nor produce pardon, nor does it receive pardon as a premium ; and yet faith and justification are inseparable. What is the reason of this ? We may, or rather we ought, to ask this question ; for the Bible invites and encourages serious and humble discussion. The reason is evident. Faith, as it looks to God, as it is the recipient of the glad tidings, marks the freeness of grace ; for what act can be more void of merit, or of moral qualifications in general, than the mere belief of good news ? Faith, as it looks to man, as it brings the Gospel to act on the mind, is the instrument of sanctification. Pardon could not be enjoyed by those whose characters were unrenewed, and faith is the only instrument by which a spiritual change can be effected. Pardon is bestowed on sinners, because Christ hath suffered the punishment which they deserved, and hath magnified the law which they had dishonoured ; and not on account of any good thing in themselves. That a pardon has been freely proclaimed through Christ, is the very thing which we are called on to



believe ; and in believing this we come to the actual possession of it. The act of amnesty is antecedent to our belief, and independent of it ; it remains firm and good, though we despise and reject it ; but by so doing, we exclude ourselves from its operation. Each individual becomes specially interested in this amnesty, by his belief of it ; which special interest is called by the Scripture ‘justification.’ This belief gives the right direction to the affections, by presenting to them their proper objects ; it restores their languid or feverish pulsation to a healthy tone ; it expands and elevates them so, that they take delight in God, and in the way of all his commandments ; it thus brings the worms of the earth into union with the King of heaven, by introducing their hearts into the enjoyment of that glorious work, in which his infinite mind rests with eternal complacency. This is generally called ‘sanctification,’ or the renewing of the heart, begun on earth, completed in heaven.” (Pages 147—149.)

The faith, then, by which we are instrumentally justified, is a faith which previously renews the character. “Pardon could not be enjoyed by those whose characters were unrenewed ; and faith is the only instrument by which a spiritual change can be effected.” Thus we are taught that our sanctification precedes our justification ; which, indeed, would otherwise follow from the author’s hypothesis. We can only be justified by faith ; faith must therefore precede justification ; and as true faith, by a natural operation, according to the constitution of our nature, effects that spiritual change which he has before described to consist in fear, penitence, joy in the message of deliverance, love to the Deliverer, and consequent likeness to him, a state of holy love, effected by an adequate conception of holy love in God ; all these effects, which constitute our sanctification, must precede our justification. But has the author meditated upon the conclusion to which this statement conducts us ? It is, that a man may joy in God, delight in God, love God, and be transformed into the resemblance of his holy love ; that is, be at once holy in heart and life, and have supreme love to God, and yet be unpardoned, under wrath, condemned, and judicially liable to everlasting

ruin ! It avails nothing to say, that pardon follows faith immediately ; for whether at a distance of an age or a moment, still it follows it ; and whatever the interval may be, in that interval this is the moral state of the unpardoned man ; the man under judicial sentence of excision from the kingdom of heaven. Nor can any penitent be entitled, according to this view, to look for pardon until his faith has produced in him all these moral changes, and excited all this joy, and love, and holiness, even whilst yet he sensibly feels the burden of his sins, and groans, “ God be merciful to me a sinner.” If this be the way to life, we fear, indeed, that we may say, “ Few there be that find it ;” and we might have expected some scriptural authority for so perplexing a statement. The author has not even attempted to give us a single text in proof ; and for the best reason, that this theory could not be found in the Scriptures. The Apostle certainly did not say to the trembling jailor, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” in the author’s sense of believing. He did not say, “ Go and study the Gospel ; get an adequate conception of the full measure of its doctrines, so as to produce faith ; which faith will, in turn, produce joy, and love, and holiness, and then thou shalt be saved.” But he welcomed the awakened sinner at once to his Saviour’s sacrifice, and bade him believe ; that is to say, trust in it for deliverance. The jailor found salvation by a nearer route than through our author’s intellectual process, and his preparatory sanctification by natural operation. He instantly fled to the horns of the exhibited altar ; he straightway believed, and was baptized. Thus must every awakened and penitent sinner be invited ; and thus he must come. Nothing else is required, but that he trust in the exhibited sacrifice ; and no preparation is required but his sense of the pressing character of his case, and his exclusion of every ground of dependence for the pardon of his sin, save the one perfect sacrifice of his Saviour.

But, according to the extract we have just given, faith not only sanctifies before justification, but afterwards. “ This belief gives the right direction to the affections,” &c. We

reject this, also, in the sense of the author. Even the faith of a justified man does not sanctify, *per se*. It is simple trust, or reliance, as the whole New Testament will show, upon the sole atonement of Christ; but the very nature of trust excludes all notions of sanctifying efficiency. It is, indeed, the leading mistake of the author, to consider faith as an efficient in sanctification, instead of an instrument. But trust in another necessarily excludes all efficiency in ourselves. We trust in him for some good; that good, in this case, is pardon and regeneration; but if Christ be the object of trust, then he is the sole efficient; and our trust is but the instrument of interesting us in the exertion and application of this efficiency. This is the true operation of faith throughout the whole Christian life. It saves us only instrumentally, by connecting us with Him who is the only Saviour, the only Deliverer, and Redeemer, and Sanctifier of men. The knowledge of Christ is, indeed, necessary to this faith; in what degree, however, no man can very accurately define: But knowledge does not produce faith; it only sets the object of faith before us; and both are saving, only as they lead us to him, and as he, in consequence, bestows upon us the benefits of his death, and the gift of his Holy Spirit. Knowledge is the light which shows the path to the city of refuge; faith is the act by which we shelter within its gates.

Like all other attempts to meet philosophy in matters of religion on its own ground, this Essay has failed; because the effect is to betray the cause of truth. The philosopher objects to the Christian doctrine of faith. He sees no reason why it should be made so imperative; he can see nothing in such a cause to account for the mighty effects which are ascribed to it. Mr. Erskine attempts to remove this difficulty; to demonstrate that all that is comprised in the doctrine of faith has a noble philosophy in it. The mind and character are influenced by knowledge; the higher, the holier the objects known, and the more adequately they are conceived by the understanding, the more forcibly must they impress the character when they are believed in as realities. The Christian religion presents

objects of the most sublime, affecting, joyous, and holy nature ; they are divine and infinite ; consequently, since, by the laws of our nature, they must produce moral effects corresponding to their own character, they are the most powerful means ever placed within the reach of man by which to purify and elevate his nature. So the philosopher is conciliated ; and, lest he should be offended at the doctrine of the Spirit's influence, this also is modified. His office is to aid the intellectual faculty by setting the truths to be received in a stronger light ; and then, let the philosopher only grant this, and no further demand shall be made upon him for concession to supernatural agency. The work of purifying the nature of man goes on through the natural operation of exalted conceptions and sentiments upon the moral capabilities of man ; and, by this process, is at length completed. To this accommodating system how much scriptural truth is sacrificed, we have already, in part, pointed out ; and, in conclusion, we may sum up those objections to it which the true doctrine of faith, as stated in the New Testament, will suggest to every enlightened Christian.

It confines saving faith to the mere intellectual reception, or crediting, of the truth of the Gospel ; and excludes personal trust from its definition. But the latter is essential to the doctrine of atonement ; for the setting forth of a special atonement for sin as an object of faith can mean nothing else than setting it forth as an object of trust, to the exclusion of all others.

It makes faith to follow necessarily from knowledge ; whereas faith, even in the sense of mere belief, does not always follow from knowledge ; unbelief being often wilful, as in the case of many of the Jews in the time of our Lord.

Faith, too, in the full evangelical sense, the faith of reliance, is the gift of God, a work of the Spirit in the heart ; a doctrine which this Essay, of course, rejects. This might be proved from more passages of Scripture than we have now room to adduce ; but it follows necessarily from two, which are familiar to all our readers : “ And the disciples came unto him,

and said, Lord, increase our faith." "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

It ascribes that moral efficiency to knowledge and belief which is in Scripture ascribed solely to the direct agency of the Spirit of God; and it thereby diverts our confidence from God to ourselves. It makes regeneration an intellectual and sentimental process, instead of a supernatural one. According to Mr. Erskine, man is born again of his enlightened understanding; and not according to our Lord, who says, "He is born of the Holy Ghost."

It makes faith at once the efficient cause, and the effect, of sanctification; a contradiction which the author has but very unsuccessfully attempted to answer.

Finally, with our author, faith is the indication of spiritual fulness in the creature; with the Scriptures it is made the indication of a sense of entire spiritual want and dependence.

How different, and yet how simple, is the inspired doctrine. Faith, as it is mere belief, may be produced by rational evidence; and is produced probably in all men who attend with candour to the evidences of Christianity. But when that is attained, the work of grace in the heart is nowhere said in Scripture to be carried on by the natural operation of these credited truths. The contrary fact, that men often credit them and remain uninfluenced by them, is obvious. When a different state of mind ensues, it is ascribed to the quickening influence of the Spirit; an influence which may be ordinarily resisted. By that influence men are "pricked in their heart;" and the heart is prepared to feel the dread impression which is conveyed by the manifestation of man's perishing state, not merely in the doctrine of the word, but as it stands in the Spirit's application to the heart and conscience. It is then that help is sought, and that the good news of deliverance becomes applicable. But though this good news was previously credited, and is still credited; and though its import and meaning are now more fully perceived as the perishing condition of the awakened man is more clearly discovered; the

faith of affiance does not therefore follow. A person in these circumstances is not to be likened to a man drowning, who will instinctively seize the rope as soon as it is thrown out to him. There is a perverse disposition in man to seek salvation in his own way, and to stand on terms with his Saviour. There is a reluctance to trust wholly in his atonement, and to be saved by grace. There is a sin of unbelief, an evil heart of unbelief, a repugnance to the committal of the soul to Christ, which the influence of grace, not merely knowledge of the opposite truth and duty, must conquer. Even when this is subdued, and man is made willing to be saved in the appointed way, a want of power is felt, not to credit the truth of the sacrifice of Christ, or its merits, or its sufficiency, but a want of power to trust wholly, and with confidence, in it, as to the issue. It is then that, like the disciples, and all good men in all ages, every man in these circumstances prays for faith; for this power to trust personally, and for himself, in the atonement made for his sins. Thus he recognises Christ as “the Author and Finisher of faith,” and faith as the gift of God, though his own duty: Thus, there is in his mind an entire renunciation of self on the one hand, and a seeking of all from Christ on the other; which cannot but be followed by the gift of faith, and by the joy which springs, not from mere sentiment, but from the attestation of the Spirit to our acceptance with God, and the felicitating manifestations of his paternal love. Then the Holy Spirit is given, not only as the Comforter, but as the Sanctifier; and, dwelling in us, we are saved from future sin, and are matured and perfected in holiness. It is in this way, too, that faith saves us to the end, by connecting us with the exerted influence and power of God, through Christ. “The life that I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” These are views which will, it is true, be a stumbling-stone and a rock of offence to the philosophers of this world. But there is no remedy in concession. Still this will stand, “Whosoever receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.”

That there are many pious sentiments and elevated views in

Mr. Erskine's Essay, we acknowledge. If they had not stood in connexion with so much error on a vital question, they would have given us pleasure ; but, connected as they are with great and fundamental mistakes, they only give the book a speciousness more misleading to uninstructed religious inquirers. The doctrine it advocates contradicts one of the great theological points of the Reformation ; and, above all, it contradicts the word of God.

## REVIEW VII.

*The Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary Affairs of Life, in a Series of Discourses. By Thomas Chalmers, D. D. Glasgow, 1820. 8vo. Pp. 278.*

THIS is a volume of Discourses on a subject of great importance in practical Christianity ; and the author has exhibited his usual vigour and ability in bringing the principles of religion to bear upon the habits and conduct of mercantile life. At all times it is important to show, that nothing in human conduct lies without the range of the control of that sanctity which the Gospel enjoins ; and that those pursuits which offer strong and constant temptations to the worldly spirit, and to the violations of justice, need special and careful subjection to the divine law. But the sermons before us have a peculiar adaptation to the times, which will render them doubly welcome to all who themselves wish to be fortified against prevalent dangers, or feel a godly jealousy, lest the virtue of professed Christians, engaged in the ordinary pursuits of life, should be endangered in the day of commercial distress and difficulty. The embarrassments of commerce, the fluctuations of property, the rivalry and competition of trade, the reduction of profits, which the late circumstances of the country have induced, undoubtedly place the conscientious merchant and tradesman in a state of severe trial ; and false or feeble virtue will not be able to endure it. Even where no act of positive injustice and fraud is committed, the heart is in great danger of becoming “ overcharged with the cares of this world,” and the fruits of the Spirit may languish and die under the withering influence of earthly attachments and earthly disappointments. To direct the eye steadily to the high and unbending rule of integrity ; to remind all who are in temptation, from the pressure of their circumstances, or the cupidity of their minds, that “ the Lord God is a God of knowledge, and that



by him actions are weighed ;” to turn the attention from the practices which may be deemed allowable among men, whom a common difficulty has disposed to judge of character and conduct by a lowered standard, to that righteousness of the Christian law which is immutable ; and to bring the eye of God, and the sanctions of eternity, into the shop and the counting-house, as well as into the sanctuary ; are objects at once most reasonable and most important ; and the manner in which they are presented in these valuable sermons can scarcely fail to produce beneficial effects. On these subjects just adverted to, we lay the following extracts before our readers.

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It is one of the great excellencies of these and of Dr. Chalmers’s former volumes of Sermons, that, in the various discussions into which his vigorous mind impels him, and amidst all the rich and striking adornings of his copious eloquence, they keep fast and faithful hold of the great peculiarities of evangelical truth. He avoids the evil into which too many theological writers fall, that of weakening one truth in his anxiety to establish and enforce another. There is a perfection in the Christian system, to every part of which he pays equal deference, justly conceiving that it forms one grand whole, the end of which is to “ make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good word and work.” It is a perfect provision for the forgiveness of human guilt ; a perfect provision for our regeneration ; and a perfect rule of human life and manners ; and thus conceived of, strongly and emphatically, there is no danger of extremes or omissions. It has its own balance within itself. Its grace is connected with its holiness ; and its spirituality is prevented from evaporating into mere mystic sentiment, by the explicitness and the solemn sanction of its practical duties. Under these views, and like the city of God, so compacted as to be at “ unity with itself,” it is presented in the pages of this volume ; and from this circumstance chiefly they derive that mighty energy by which they are distinguished.

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We have made a sufficient number of extracts to convey to our readers an adequate idea of the manner in which the author has endeavoured to raise the principle of commercial justice and honour to the true tone and pitch of the moralists of the New Testament, and to bring the ordinary concerns of life under its control. These we conceive were his leading objects in the former sermons in this volume. Such topics could not, however, be brought under consideration, without suggesting to the mind of the Preacher, that great virtues of this class are to be produced in men, whose general spirit and habit of feeling on religious subjects sufficiently prove that Christianity has excited no efficient and saving influence upon them, and that they are in truth "men of the world, whose portion is in this life." It could not also but be observed, that such persons not unfrequently rest upon these claims to integrity in their transactions, as the ground of their future acceptance with God; that they place in them all that is substantial and essential in religion; and, in some cases, consider the gaieties, and even the dissipations, of life as venial, when thus associated with the practice of righteous and honourable dealing. This delusion Dr. Chalmers ably exposes, whilst he acknowledges the fact with an exulting feeling, that virtues of this kind do actually and frequently appear. In the same moment that he allows to this respectable class of persons all the praise to which they are entitled from man, with an unsparing hand he strips off the guise which so often hides from their own eyes the real nakedness and moral deformity which they present to the searching eye of the omniscient God.

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Where so much is to be approved and admired, we would have passed over one exception, did it not affect a great doctrinal principle, of which it behoves every one to entertain the most explicit views; because a wavering or false conception of it is apt very greatly to influence our opinions on other essential points. The statement which Dr. Chalmers has made of the doctrine of human depravity, in the first sermon, appears to us both defective in itself, and calculated to lead

to palliations on this humbling subject, which he himself would very strenuously refuse to sanction.

From this sermon we have already made an extract. It is "On the Mercantile Virtues which may exist without the Influence of Christianity." The author conceives that the doctrine of "the universal depravity of man" has been often maintained "in such a style of sweeping and vehement asseveration," as to be inconsistent with the phenomena which the human character actually exhibits. "Let the nature of man be a ruin, as it certainly is; it is obvious to the most common discernment, that it does not offer one unvaried and unalleviated mass of deformity." We are then told of the virtues of some Heathens; and of the integrity, compassion, generosity, and honour of many among ourselves, from whose minds the genuine religious principle is absent; and in stating the doctrine of man's corruption, the Doctor recommends us, therefore, to fasten on "the radical element of depravity," the alienation of the heart from God; and to show, that, notwithstanding the existence of a class of virtues, which he terms "constitutional," to convict man "of the impiety of not caring about God," in any thing. In this view, therefore, there may be in our nature generosity, and friendship, and mercy, and integrity, without acquitting man of the charge of being an entire direlict in his obligations to God, and that the proof of human depravity lies not so much in the absence of qualities which are universally acknowledged to be virtuous, as in the principle from which this direliction springs.

Much of what is said on this subject is just; but it is not investigated with the usual discrimination of the author.

In the first place, we apprehend that he mistakes, in supposing so much difference between himself and those whom he censures, for stating the doctrine of human depravity in too sweeping a manner; for surely no one ever maintained that unconverted men are not, in some cases, generous, just, and honourable. The class of Divines to whom Dr. Chalmers refers have certainly represented the natural man as presenting an unvaried mass of deformity to God, but have never spoken of him as this unalleviated mass of deformity, in every instance,

to men. This is the distinction ; and how much does Dr. Chalmers himself differ from this opinion ? He justly observes, that all the compassionate feeling, and the integrity, of this class of men, may be as totally unconnected with a single movement of dutiful loyalty to the Lawgiver in heaven, as the gentleness of one animal, the fidelity of another, and the gratitude of a third. Here, then, there is not the least alleviation of the totality of human depravity, by this apparent concession, as far as the question lies between God and his creature. Certain good qualities are called by circumstances into exercise ; but there is no reference in that exercise to any obligation laid upon us by God ; nothing is done or left undone, because he wills or forbids it. As to God, these qualities, therefore, are not virtues, and the case of man is not alleviated by them. If these excellencies, therefore, are exhibited, they owe their manifestation either to some inferior motive, or they are constitutional and instinctive. That an inferior principle to that of regarding God may be the source of very imposing virtues between man and man, is very ably proved in the third discourse, on “the Power of Selfishness,” &c. Here the compassionate, the just, the honourable man, who stalks abroad in so proud an array of excellence, that it might, for a moment, be doubted whether the forbidden fruit had ever been tasted, or that the moral constitution of our kind suffered a taint, is stripped of his factitious adornings ; and the whole of this display is resolved into one of the meanest and most humbling depravities of our nature. “Selfishness, in fact, may have originated and sustained the whole of this virtue that belongs to you.” In all this we perceive no difference between Dr. Chalmers, and those who contend for the total degeneracy of man. If selfishness originates these virtues, that is, if they are exhibited for the sake of honour and interest among men, they are not real, but mock virtues. They cannot deceive Omniscience ; and as to man, they are assumed ; they are acts, and not principles.

But widely as selfishness and hypocrisy are allowed to operate in producing the semblance of moral excellencies, it is still contended, that there are some real constitutional

virtues in man, which may be pleaded against the representations usually made of the universal depravity of his nature.

“ Might not a sense of honour elevate that heart which is totally unfurnished with a sense of God? Might not an impulse of compassionate feeling be sent into that bosom which is never once visited by a movement of duteous loyalty towards the Lawgiver in heaven? Might not occasions of intercourse with the beings around us develope whatever there is in our nature of generosity, and friendship, and integrity, and patriotism; and yet the unseen Being, who placed us in this theatre, be neither loved, nor obeyed, nor listened to? Amid the manifold varieties of human character, and the number of constitutional principles which enter into its composition, might there not be an individual in whom the constitutional virtues so blaze forth and have the ascendancy, as to give a general effect of gracefulness to the whole of this moral exhibition; and yet, may not that individual be as unmindful of his God, as if the principles of his constitution had been mixed up in such a different proportion, as to make him an odious and a revolting spectacle?” (Pages 15, 16.)

Now, on this view we may remark, that, if by constitutional virtues our author means instinctive ones,—and this we conceive to be his notion,—virtues to which our nature impels us, and in which the will is rather passive than active, though this would by no means relieve the question of man’s depravity as to God, to whom neither the motive nor the end of these virtuous feelings, nor the acts which they originate, are referred; yet, if the fact could be made out, it would appear to be an abatement of those deep conceptions which the sacred writers uniformly express, as to the human heart and the natural man. There are some individuals, at least, of the species, who must, in that case, be excepted from certain general representations which we find in the Scriptures. The nature of such is, upon the whole, better than the general doctrine; though its religious character, from the entire absence of the religious principle, subjection to God, is not improved.

But against this doctrine of constitutional and instinctive

virtues ; some objections lie which, to us, are very formidable. We can easily conceive that, by his constitutional conformation, one man shall be of spirits more lively than another, and that he shall mix in the intercourse of society in a more agreeable and less mischievous manner ; and that one should be more susceptible of the impressions of pity, and, of course, more disposed to afford aid to the distresses of his fellow-creatures than a man of sterner nature. But as justice and integrity are conventional virtues, as they result from rights and duties either established by God, or by men, or by both, and suppose instruction in the nature and obligation of these duties and rights, and are originated by the will, we cannot see how any constitutional formation can become the source of these principles. A savage being, in a state of society where the laws of property are unknown, might have touches of humanity, but how he would be impelled to acts of justice, against all custom and example, by constitutional feeling, it is difficult to conceive.

Again: Virtues merely constitutional would be found to develop themselves pretty equally under all circumstances, like instincts of every other kind. But this is not the fact. Very much depends upon the altitude of the moral standard, and the state of society in which they live ; for men are virtuous or vicious, in common parlance, by comparison. Dr. Chalmers speaks of those repeated exemplifications of what is bright and beautiful in the character of man, which sparkle in the classic page of antiquity. But surely the virtuous man, there spoken of with so much praise, would often make a pitiful figure in a country like ours, where the rule of public judgment is exalted by Christianity. Titus, the *deliciæ humani generis*, caused fifteen hundred Jews to be slain at Cæsarea in honour of his brother's birth-day. Cicero calls Pompey, *hominem integrum, et castum, et gravem* ; and yet this man openly tampered with the Judges, in behalf of his father-in-law, when impeached ; and Cicero himself, however indignant he appears against the vices of Catiline, in his Orations, was once inclined to have undertaken his defence, when tried for some atrocious murders. Even our author's

fine burst of eloquent exultation at the superior character of British merchants for honourable dealing, page 30, is in point. We join with him in the conclusion, that the glories of British policy and British valour are eclipsed by the moral splendour which British faith has thrown over the name and the character of our nation. But then he allows that many of these men of far-famed honourable dealing are men utterly without religion, that they are "natural men," in the same sense as the less honourable merchants of other countries. How, then, is it that they have a superior character? If the superior virtue be constitutional, then are we to conclude, that the Creator has moulded a race of merchants for us with a superior mixture of better ingredients,—a position too absurd to be maintained; or, that circumstances have among us attracted a larger proportion of men of better nature into the walks of commerce, which is equally indefensible; or else, that these superior virtues must arise out of the moral circumstances of our country, which render integrity more honourable, and the violations of it more fatal to character and interest, or in some other way check the opposite vicious practice.

There are two circumstances in the fact of the moral corruption of our kind, which are not to be lost sight of, in speaking on this subject. One is, that human depravity is specific. It is human, not diabolical, depravity, except in its capabilities. Devils delight in evil, as it would seem from the Scriptures, simply as evil. Man is totally destitute of appetency for good, and is even at enmity with it, and with its Author, because both are opposed to his tastes and to his gratifications, and both enjoin duties at which his nature spurns. Evil seems to be chosen by us, not precisely, in the first instance, abstractedly, because it is evil, but notwithstanding that it is evil, and because it offers itself under the forms of pleasure, interest, or honour, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." The approach to diabolical depravity, however, commences with the first instance of actual sin, and the deterioration runs on quickly, if not powerfully checked, to that awful point, "Evil, be thou my good." Ours is,

therefore, a kind of depravity, capable of being checked in the act, even when it is not amended in the principle.

The second consideration to be taken into the account is, that though the fountain be wholly corrupt, yet it pours forth its most copious stream in different directions in different persons. There is a "sin which easily besets" every individual ; and when religion itself has erected her mounds around the tide of evil, some one part is, in many instances, so often broken through by the violence of the pressure, that it long remains the weakest and most dangerous point. Whether this arises, not from the presence of counteracting constitutional virtues, but from different degrees of constitutional vice, or from the circumstances of trial and temptation into which we are cast in this various state of things, from the arrangements of which a thousand almost unconscious impulses are made upon us daily, it may be difficult to determine. Our own opinion leans to the latter view ; but the fact of this variety, both in our temptations and in our evil inclinations, cannot be disputed.

To these two specialities in the fallen nature of man, we must add a very important circumstance taken from "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is, the influence which his Spirit exerts upon the minds of men, according to the degree of authorized truth which exists among them. Now, by whatever names Divines, led by their respective systems, have called this influence, whether special or common, or preventing and restraining, or saving grace, almost all have agreed that it is imparted ; and in this they are doubtless confirmed by the holy Scriptures.

We collect these ideas in order to make them bear upon the subject ; and we think that it will appear that the moral varieties among unconverted men may be accounted for, without resorting to any such solvent as the constitutional and instinctive virtues mentioned by Dr. Chalmers.

We have, then, before us a nature, in its progress, it is true, to that state of diabolical depravity in which evil is considered abstractedly as its good, but which, in the majority of men, has not reached that point. It is at enmity to positive



good and to its Author; but sin is loved, not yet wholly in its naked and abstract form, but for the pleasure, the interest, the honour, which it imparts or promises. Let us suppose, then, a case in which the pain of some sin, or some sinful habit, overbalances the pleasure; the loss, the profit; the disgrace, the honour; and the sin may be renounced, but solely on the principle of selfishness, or from the influence which one vice has over another. Here, then, is avoidance of sin, or reformation from it, without the least alleviation of human depravity, and without being followed by the production of the least degree of good principle.

We have before us also a nature, which, though capable of evil of every kind, (for our author will not contend that the "constitutional virtues" of which he speaks are not vincible,) makes its evil capabilities manifest in some particular act or habit, just as the circumstances of temptation are arranged. Against that temptation, independent of the grace of God, it is in no case proof. It yields itself an easy and a willing victim. But when the temptation does not address itself, the vice lies dormant; the snake lies torpid in its retreat, because the sun does not happen to shine upon it with sufficient vigour; but it is there. The capacity for evil does not, therefore, develope itself as to some vices, because the assault is not made in that quarter; but is that a proof of virtue? Is that an abatement of the corruption of the heart? Or, to put this view differently: There may be a double temptation, addressed to opposite vices, as to covetousness and prodigality, at the same time; but if avarice overcome profusion, or the contrary, no virtue is produced by the process; one vice merely succeeds in overcoming another; or both may, for the moment, be neutralized, and the semblance of wise and prudent liberality may be created. How much variety of conduct and feeling may thus be effected, where neither constitutional nor any other kind of virtue exists?

But, finally, we have the influence of the Holy Spirit, and especially in Christian countries, accompanying the Gospel; and surely this is not inefficient. The morality of all Christian nations is higher than that of heathen nations; a kinder

order of affections is introduced into the hearts of men generally, they are saved from many evils; they imitate many virtues; they take something of the character and the spirit of the system, even when, for want of faithfulness to its calls and influence, they stop short of the kingdom of heaven. Now that which the Gospel infuses into human nature is not to be put to the account of human nature; nor can that be pleaded in abatement of the charge of its total depravity, which arises not from itself, but from the grace of Christ. On the contrary, that, notwithstanding all these assistances, and the vouchsafement of all this influence, it should yet hold out against the motives of true religion, and remain unsubdued by its mercy, and, indeed, as to any saving purpose, by its revelations of life and immortality, is one of the most striking proofs of its obduracy, its worldliness, and, in a word, its complete and emphatic depravity.

Substantially, we believe Dr. Chalmers and we agree on this great point, which is the foundation of the whole Gospel system; but we think that his doctrine of "constitutional virtues" in our nature, is liable to mislead, and that it is false in fact. The phenomena which the characters of unconverted men present may be sufficiently accounted for without such a concession; and whatever appearance of virtue there may be in the better kind of unsaved men, we are persuaded that it is to be attributed, either to the influence of God upon their minds, or to the various aspects which human corruption assumes, now working under the guise of moral excellencies, and now neutralized by the balancings of the vices themselves.

On the remaining sermons our limits forbid us to remark. The whole volume is worthy of the most serious attention; and we, with much satisfaction, strongly recommend it to **our** readers.

## REVIEW VIII.

*Sermons preached in St. John's Church, Glasgow. By Thomas Chalmers, D.D. 8vo. Pp. 446. 10s. 6d. Glasgow. 1823.*

FEW writers of sermons have attained so sudden and so deserved a celebrity as Dr. Chalmers; and it has fallen to the lot of few Ministers to bring so many high qualities into equally powerful and harmonious exercise in their pulpit labours;—the generalizing faculty which seizes the philosophy of a subject; the power of sustaining that subject by continuous and forceful argument; of accumulating evidence upon the point to be carried home to the conviction of the understanding; and of adorning it often with the richest poetry, and a copious and original elocution. The greatest praise of the author is, that all these qualities are constantly sanctified to the great ends of the Christian ministry; that he is always in earnest; that his constant aim to exhibit Christianity to his hearers in its vital and practical influence, and to lead them, as well from the vapid forms of an external creed and worship, as from the spirit and practice of the world, to the “faith which worketh by love,” and to the active virtues of the Christian life.

With the impression of his energetic pulpit ministrations, none but those who have frequently heard him can be fully acquainted; but that made by his printed sermons, and other writings, has been felt wherever the English language is read; and it will remain long after his career of personal usefulness shall have closed. Dr. Chalmers stands, perhaps, at the head of all living characters in the power of impelling to works of piety and usefulness; in the practical direction which he has impressed upon religious communities and individuals; and in the exposition of those possibilities of useful exertion which he has opened to benevolent zeal, and of those facilities

for doing good which before were by many either ill understood, or entirely unknown.

The range of usefulness taken by his sermons is more circumscribed, but still highly important; and, within their own circle, no modern productions of this class operate with so sweeping an energy. Those now before us, however, are not, in general, sermons for the body of plain people; nor are they particularly calculated to assist in the building up of such Christians as are already far advanced in their growth, and rising towards spiritual maturity. We should not fairly characterize them, if we said that the penitent spirit, the broken and the contrite heart, is here very clearly instructed in the important doctrine of present pardon by faith in Christ, and of the witness of the Spirit, as giving an immediate attestation of that pardon to the believer. The great truths in which these classes of hearers and readers are interested are, indeed, often introduced; and there is a splendid and most imposing exhibition of the grace and sanctity of the Gospel; but the method of approach to them is not always made sufficiently obvious. To show what is the religion of the heart, as it stands in principles and affections, and to convince men of mere forms, and of mere doctrinal zeal, of the entire absence of Christianity from their hearts, or of its mixture with spurious and deadening compositions in their moral habit, is the leading general character and office of the discourses contained in this volume; in which, however, there are separate sermons, and parts of sermons, which lay down important doctrines of universal interest, and urge to duties stamped with the fairest and broadest characters of Christian benevolence and purity.

The volume before us, though perhaps not quite up to the rank of the former volumes of Sermons published by Dr. Chalmers in uniformity of excellence, is superior to them in correctness of composition, and contains a number of very able and important discourses.

It is dangerous to venture upon quotations where there is so much to attract, lest we go too far; and both on this account, and because we wish to reserve room for a few remarks on the

Sermon on Predestination, our extracts will be chiefly selected from two or three of the sermons in the former part of the volume.

The sermon on predestination embodies the theological doctrine, on that subject, entertained by the highly-respectable Church of which the author is so distinguished a Minister ; but we confess that it is here stated so broadly, and even, in our judgment, so dangerously, that we have read it with deep regret. Not, indeed, that we felt our very opposite faith on this long-contested article at all shaken ; for the great logical powers of Dr. Chalmers have, as it seems to us, in no instance appeared to less advantage. Our regret has a very different source. We have seen this eminent Minister heretofore employing all the energies of his mind, and fancy, and elocution, on the side of practical godliness ; rousing the lukewarm ; detecting the formalist ; and explaining and enforcing, with an ability which few have reached, that great fundamental of true and saving Christianity, "Ye must be born again." We have anticipated the best effects from the mighty bearing of his ministry on this one point ; and we could have wished that, at Glasgow, and wherever it may reach through his printed discourses, it might have rested in all its impressiveness upon both hearers and readers, without alloy, and without counteraction. The reason of our regret is, that it is not so ; and that the course of argument in this sermon is as directly subversive, as it could unintentionally be, of Dr. Chalmers's most practical and convincing ministry. The aim of the excellent author was the very reverse of this. He had touched many topics, in the hope of turning them into the gold of spiritual and laborious Christianity ; he applied his talisman to predestination with precisely the same intention ; but this dogma is not of yielding stuff ; the transmutation is uneffected ; the lead still remains ; and the very attempt, it may be feared, has only hung it as a dead weight around some of those whose wings the Preacher had plumed for the flights of devotion, and whose feet he had shod for the active duties of the Christian life.

Having added our most sincere and hearty commendation

of Dr. Chalmers's Sermons, in general, to that of the public voice, it is but justice to our readers, and to the common cause of evangelical truth, that we should on this subject record our caveat, and support it by our reasons.

Our first remark is, that the doctrine of predestination is vaguely stated at the commencement of the sermon on that subject. "There is evidence for it in the Bible." That is true; but, for predestination in what sense? That the doctrine of predestination is in the Bible, both evangelical Arminians and Calvinists are agreed; but as to the nature and extent of it, they widely differ. "To deny it, is to suppose God to make a world, and not to reserve in his own hands the management of its concerns." This would follow from the unqualified denial of predestination; but not from the denial of it as held by Calvin, and the Synod of Dort. The denial, it is further intimated, would deprive God of omniscience, by depriving him of prescience. This is altogether assumed; for a hundred times it has been proved, not only that the prescience of God is consistent with human freedom, but that, on the principle of necessity, all that is glorious and surpassing in that attribute is lost. It does not give us a true idea of a divine government, to say that God compels all the actions of men. This is a notion which annihilates the distinction between natural and moral government entirely, and makes the management of the world nothing more than the management of an automaton, which, if it can be called government at all, is so in a very imperfect sense. But as to prescience, its proper notion is still more impaired by that necessity which an absolute predestination implies. For what is singular in the fact, that an intelligent Being knows what he intends to do, and what, because he is almighty, he will absolutely effect? Thus it is that these first principles, the moral government and prescience of God, may be turned against the views of the author; and, on much better grounds than those on which he has contended for the doctrine, may it be alleged, that predestination, in the high Calvinian sense of that term, can neither consist with the rule of God over intelligent and accountable creatures, nor with any such prescience as tran-

scends the comprehension of human faculties,—the view in which it is constantly represented to us in the Scriptures.

But if, in the outset of the discourse, the author's notion of predestination is not expressly stated, it is made sufficiently explicit as we proceed ; and we are sorry to observe, that it is exhibited in its most exceptionable and dangerous form,—predestination in the sense of God's predetermining to do immediately, or cause to be done by others, whatever shall come to pass. The application of this broad and revolting principle to sinful actions, and to the doctrine of reprobation, is indeed avoided ; but we see nothing in the sermon to limit the principle, or to prevent others from thus applying it. No middle path is allowed by the author to exist between “ bringing the creation under nameless and undeterminable contingencies, and taking the world and the current of its history out of the hands of Him who formed it,” and subjecting the government of mind to the same rule as the government of matter. This is a point so often referred to in the sermon, that we cannot mistake the kind of predestination which is advocated. The very manner in which it is stated shows it to be unconditional and universal. We are accordingly directed, as to a confirmation of these views, to the evidence afforded by “ another field of observation,” referring to God's government of nature, “ where, instead of the lawlessness of chance, we shall find that the more we attend, the more we perceive of a necessary and established order.” “ God is as much master of the human heart as he is of the elements.” “ Every step of every individual character receives as determinate a character from the hand of God, as every mile of a planet's orbit, or every gust of wind, or every wave of the sea, or every particle of flying dust, or every rivulet of flowing water.” It is added :—

“ This power of God knows no exceptions. It is absolute and unlimited ; and while it embraces the vast, it carries its resistless influence to all the minute and unnoticed diversities of existence. It reigns and operates through all the secrecies of the inner man. It gives birth to every purpose. It gives impulse to every desire. It gives shape and colour to every

conception. It wields an entire ascendancy over every attribute of the mind ; and the will, and the fancy, and the understanding, with all the countless variety of their hidden and fugitive operations, are submitted to it. It gives movement and direction through every one point in the line of our pilgrimage. At no one moment of time does it abandon us. It follows us to the hour of death, and it carries us to our place and our everlasting destiny in the region beyond it." (Pages 309, 310.)

To us it seems, that, under the admirable expression of this fine passage the worst doctrine which can be sounded in the ears of man is concealed ; though we are quite sure that it is regarded under a very different view by the pious and excellent author. For if all this be true as a universal proposition, —and as such it is stated,—then the irresistible inference is, that it is God who makes man what he is, as certainly and efficaciously as he makes the elements what they are, and as he determines, by an immediate impulse too, all their motions. It is this "working of God, all in all," in the sense of Dr. Chalmers, which makes man a saint : This is acknowledged ; but if the premises be allowed, if God works in and upon man as upon the planet in its orbit, and upon every gust of wind, and every rivulet of water ; if his power "gives birth to every purpose, and impulse to every desire ;" then the tremendous conclusion logically follows, that man is also made a sinner by an external and irresistible agency, and that the agency of God himself ! At this consequence Dr. Chalmers would doubtless shrink ; and yet, if it be denied, what becomes of the opinion on which it is inevitably suspended ?

Dr. Chalmers speaks of the "agency of willing and intelligent beings ;" which, however, so far from offering any exception to the general principle just stated, is made to confirm and establish it. On the subject of the human will, as on predestination, it is assumed, that, if one extreme is not admitted, we must admit the opposite ; and, as though but one or other of these extremes had ever been held by man, or was capable of being held, all intermediate views are overlooked. The author will not admit a "sovereign and independent prin-



ciple of freedom." "Let us not," he observes, "erect the will of the creature into an independent principle ; let us not conceive that the agency of man can bring about one single iota of deviation from the plans and purposes of God." What, then, is the human will ? And what is the opposite extreme, to which, it seems to be assumed, we must necessarily fly, in order to avoid that which is justly deprecated ? "The will of man," says Dr. Chalmers, "active, spontaneous, and fluctuating as it appears to be, is an instrument in his hand, and he turns it at his pleasure, and he brings other instruments to act upon it, and he plies it with all its excitements, and he measures the force and proportion of each of them, and every step of every individual receives as determinate a character from the hand of God, as every mile of a planet's orbit," &c. In other words, the will only appears to be active and spontaneous ; whilst, in reality, it is as passive an instrument in the hand of God, and as unresistingly acted upon as the stars in their courses ! Nor does this apply to the work of God in and upon the elect only. The propositions, as in the former case, are universal ; the doctrine which they contain, therefore, respects the wicked, as well as the righteous ; and the painful conclusion again irresistibly forces itself into view, that the will of man, in all its obliquities, and its most vicious biasses, works out only the will of God, and that, too, by "the working of God."

These views any where would be revolting ; but they are distressing in the writings of Dr. Chalmers, whose pages have been devoted with so much constancy to heighten and perfect the virtue of the church, and to counteract, by the application of his own energy, and the excitement of that of others, the vices of the world. If these principles be true, it appears to us that the essence of virtue is destroyed, and that vice has neither remedy nor blame. Instrumental agency only is seen in society, whether good or bad ; and the only efficient in the universe is God. Thus, in combating the errors of one class of infidel philosophers, who exclude the divine agency entirely, the author rushes into the error of another : He brings the philosophy of the Hindoos, as well as the sciolism of the

Fatalist, into the Christian church, and makes God the efficient in every thing, good and evil.

To what practical use of piety and zeal such principles can be turned, is an inquiry which excites a curiosity like that which would be roused by a proposal to make fire refrigerate, and to convert poison into aliment. But it is due to the author to say, that he proceeds to this task with his usual earnestness and sincerity ; and if all his readers were content to surrender themselves to be carried along the tide of the good feeling which pervades this discourse, there would be no fear of their taking a wrong direction. Human nature is, however, watchful for reasons of excuse from serious application to the work of salvation, and for palliatives of neglect and offence. There is the thinking head, as well as the deceitful heart, to be dealt with in this matter ; and unless the entire neutrality of the former could be secured, we fear that too just an occasion is given to its ready activity, to seek a sanction “ for the deceivableness of unrighteousness,” in the authority of these distorted representations of inspired truth. When the affections are ranged on the side of evil, the case is sufficiently bad ; but when the understanding is furnished, however undesignedly, with arguments to justify or excuse it, the moral man becomes impregnable : One sinks the ditch ; but the other raises the wall, and builds towers of defiance.

Dr. Chalmers's attempt to turn the doctrine of absolute predestination to practical benefit must, however, be briefly examined. His text is formed from two passages selected from the history of St. Paul's shipwreck : “ And now I exhort you, be of good cheer ; for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship ;” collocated with, “ Paul said to the Centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” His great object is to show, that, though the former verse expresses “ the absolute purpose of God,” that the men were to be saved, and that “ no obstacle whatever could prevent its accomplishment ;” yet, as the latter verse equally declares that unless the sailors abode in the ship they could not be saved, predestination and practical religion are essentially connected ; for, after the propositions

are thus set to fight with each other, he reconciles them by the aid of "a known truth, that God worketh by instruments." "God ordains the end, and he ordains the means." This is the leading principle by which he elaborates the practical conclusion to which he would conduct his hearers.

To the manner in which the import of the first part of the text, chosen for the illustration of the Preacher's argument, is stated, this natural objection arises,—that it is not supported either by the terms of the text, or by any part of the history. St. Paul declares, on the authority of his vision, that there should be no loss of any man's life among them; but he nowhere states, that this was the absolute purpose of God, and that no obstacle whatever could prevent it. This is brought to the text, not found in it. It arises, not out of the history, but from Dr. Chalmers's preconceived opinions; and it has, therefore, no other authority than that on which these opinions are founded; none at all from the inspired record, which does not state the declaration in any such terms. But this version of the Apostle's words is not only gratuitous, but contradicted by the history. For,

1. The declaration was not that of a purpose, in the sense of a decree, at all, but of a promise. The angel says, "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." This, declares the Apostle, "I believe:" "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." Now, a settled, an absolute purpose or decree, as to what God will certainly do, is not properly an object of faith; but a promise is; and the very terms of the communication, and the corresponding effect upon the mind of the Apostle, equally prove that he considered it to be promissory, a kind of engagement which admits of conditions, both express and implied. For, let it be observed, that the object of the Apostle's faith was not that he had had a revelation. That he knew by higher evidence,—the evidence of sense; and, therefore, had there been a promulgation of a secret and absolute decree of God in that revelation, it would have been folly to talk of believing it. The object of his faith was simply, that God would accomplish that which he had promised. But,

2. However the words of the angel are understood, whether as a declaration of God's purpose, or of his promise, in neither sense was it absolute. The author so states it ; but the history shows that the Apostle did not so understand it. If he had, there was no motive to induce him to oppose the going away of the mariners in the boat. An absolute purpose, or promise, has no respect at all to circumstances, limitations, or conditions ; and almighty power could as well have saved the men in the boat as in the ship. St. Paul, however, qualifies the promise ; he limits it by a certain circumstance ; he appends to it the condition, " Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved ;" and so far was he from thinking that " no obstacle whatever could prevent its accomplishment," that he represented their leaving the ship as a fatal measure, and totally subversive of the divine purpose or promise, whichever it may be called. Now if this limitation or condition was not in the original communication, what authority had the Apostle to append it ? And if it was there, the promise was not originally absolute, but conditional. Instead, therefore, of the two passages which form Dr. Chalmers's text needing reconciliation, they were never at variance, but in his mode of stating them. A conditional promise is given ; and the performance of the condition is the *sine quâ non* of its fulfilment. The case is not altered, if it be called by any other name than a promise. Call it a purpose : It was God's purpose to save the lives of the mariners ; but under a certain circumstance, in the ship, not out of it. Call it God's predestination, or say that he predestinated them to be saved ; still it was predetermination and predestination under certain circumstances, and under no other, and therefore it was not absolute.

This, we think, would be a sufficient answer to all that Dr. Chalmers has said in this discourse, because it takes away the only foundation on which he has built his argument. But it is worth while to pursue the subject as further unfolded, in order to show the consequences to which the doctrine of absolute predestination logically leads.

The limitation of the promise just mentioned, which, in

common theological language, is called a condition, is allowed. Dr. Chalmers calls the thirty-first verse "a conditional assertion:"—Unless the sailors abode in the ship they could not be saved. How, then, is this limitation or condition made consistent with an absolute, and therefore unconditional, purpose that they should be saved? This is so direct a contradiction in terms, that to reconcile the propositions is impossible; and as one must give way, and Dr. Chalmers holds it as a first principle that the purpose was absolute, he annihilates the condition, and does so in the very attempt to uphold it! His argument is, that, in order to make the condition accord with an absolute purpose, Almighty God made the performance of that condition necessary; in other words, that he obliged it. Paul could not help entreating the sailors not to leave the ship, and they could not leave it; and, therefore, they were all saved. This summary of his reasoning we must confirm by the excellent Preacher's own words:—

"He had determined, that all the men of the vessel should be saved; but agreeably to the method of His administration in other cases, he brought it about by the operation of instruments. He did not save them against the use of instruments, but he did it by the use of instruments. The instruments he employed were men. Paul speaking to the centurion, the centurion ordering the soldiers to cut the ropes and let the boat away from the vessel, the sailors obliged to work for their own safety,—these were the instruments of God, and he had as much command over them as of any others he has created. He brought about the saving of the men by means of those instruments, as certainly as he brings about a good harvest by the instrument of favourable weather, and congenial seasons. He is as much master of the human heart and its determinations, as he is of the elements. He reigns in the mind of man, and can turn its purposes in any way that suits his purposes. He made Paul speak. He made the centurion listen and be impressed by it. He made the soldiers obey. He made the sailors exert themselves. The conditional assertion of the thirty-first verse was true; but he made the assertion

serve the purpose for which it was uttered. He over-ruled the condition, and brought about the fulfilment of the absolute prophecy in the twenty-second verse. The whole of this process was as completely over-ruled by him as any other process in nature ; and in virtue, too, of the very same power by which he can cause the wind of heaven to fly loose upon the world, make the rain descend, the corn ripen into harvest, and all the blessings of plenty sit in profusion over a happy and a favoured land." (Pages 303, 304.)

Now if this be a true representation of the case, it is clear to our minds that there was no limitation or condition in the case at all ; and to take the instance given, of "bringing about a good harvest by the instrument of favourable weather and congenial seasons," it might, with equal propriety, be said, that a good harvest was promised on the condition of favourable weather, which is but a passive instrument in the hand of God, as to say that God purposed to save the lives of the sailors, on condition of their remaining in the ship ; when they were instruments just as passive in the affair, as sunshine and rains in the production of harvest. Thus the propositions destroy each other ; if the purpose was absolute, there was no condition ; if a condition be forthcoming, the purpose was not absolute.

This also makes manifest the real fallacy of that constant salvo, to which the advocates of absolute predestination resort, when pressed with the inconsistency of enforcing human endeavours in the affair of salvation. "God ordains the end, and he ordains the means," is the reply ; and this is thought sufficient to meet the objection. But it follows, if the predestination be absolute, that there are no conditions at all ; and, therefore, it is in vain to speak to men, as Dr. Chalmers does, most admirably, in the hortatory part of his sermon, of their "betaking themselves to the business in hand," "resolving against iniquities," "plying the throne of grace," &c. For what possible meaning is there in these warm and excellent exhortations, if those who are addressed are not to infer that, if they do not "betake themselves to the business in hand," if they do not "turn to Christ," if they do not "ply the

throne of grace," they will not be saved? But this would give them all the nature of conditions, which, as we have seen, it is a contradiction in terms to connect with an absolute, that is, an unconditional, purpose of saving them. There was not a hearer of those animated addresses to the affections and the consciences, with which even this discourse abounds, but might have said, "Turning to Christ, relying on him, &c., may be instruments of my salvation, but they are not conditions; for, if I am the object of a gracious predestination, God's purpose to save me is unconditional. I grant that God will save me by my own instrumentality; but that is another matter. Instrumentality is one thing; conditionality another. I run no risk in not now betaking myself to the business in hand; for there is no condition in the case. I never shall run any risk; for when I am to become the instrument of my own salvation, God will make me so, as 'he made Paul speak, and the soldiers obey, and the sailors exert themselves;' as he makes 'the wind of heaven to fly loose upon the world, and the corn ripen into harvest.'"

And here we may also ask, how it is that this very respectable Preacher speaks of men "resisting and putting off," and with what reconcilableness to his own principle, so unequivocally laid down, can he warn them against this? All along he has represented God as working in the human heart as he works among the elements of nature; the powers of the mind being in the same sense his instruments, as blind and unresisting matter. Who, then, can resist? Who can put off? Can the sun refuse to shine, or the dust to fly, or the rivulet to flow? Thus his doctrine unhappily tends to arm his hearers against his exhortations; and to teach them, that, if they are not "willing," "the day of his power" is not come; and that the reason of their present sloth and spiritual immobility is not in themselves but in God, whose hand is not upon them. Now this is any thing but practical preaching; it is a lamentable process of neutralizing the effect of warm and honest ministerial exhortation, which affects us with regret in proportion as we perceive with what genuineness, both of warmth and honesty, that exhortation is, in this case, administered.

Under all these extreme views of Dr. Chalmers, there is, however, a substratum of truth ; for the great evil in these discussions is, not to mark where the truth ends, and not to respect those limits beyond which it becomes deep and dangerous error. There is certainly an absolute predestination ; that is, a predetermination in the divine mind to effect some things independently of all conditions, or limiting circumstances. So he determined, purposed, to create the world ; to send his Son in the flesh, in the fulness of time ; to save guilty men only by his death ; to receive into his favour all who repent and believe in Christ ; to conform believers to the image of his Son ; to cause the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles ; to raise the dead ; and to judge the world by Jesus Christ. All these, and many others, were, or still are, absolute purposes. And even upon the foresight of certain, though unnecessitated, results of the choice of voluntary agents, he predetermines absolutely, in consequence of them, and often even by them, to effect certain purposes ; and these results not being conditions at all, not having any such relation to the events following, though they are truly the results of a free and uncontrolled choice, may fully consist with an absolute purpose. These views are not only amply sufficient to support the doctrine of a divine government, to rescue the world from chance, and “ to reserve in the hand of God the management of its concerns,” —the points on which Dr. Chalmers is so laudably strenuous, —but also to establish a view of his government much more honourable, much more accordant with Scripture and with sound reason, than that involved in the kind of predestination which is here advocated. The former lays the foundation of the divine government in foresight ; the latter in a universal pre-ordination and appointment. One makes it the glory of the dominion of God, that he, by pre-adapting his arrangements to the certainly foreseen but unnecessitated acts of moral agents, turns every thing, by an adorable wisdom, to the manifestation of his grace and justice ; the other gives him his plan, to the accomplishment of which every thing is to be bent and forced. One is a government of infinite skill as well as power ; the other requires no more skill than what is requi-



site to apply almighty and resistless energy precisely in those directions in which it may best accomplish the end. The government of God, in one case, is the management of a mechanism, which is previously laid, and incapable of struggle and resistance ; and in the other, it is the rule of mind, whose resistance or compliance is provided against, and the issue, not the act, is over-ruled. Need we ask which of these representations best agrees with the views of the divine government contained in Scripture? “He maketh the wrath of man to praise him.” “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh.” “How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” “Through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles,” &c.

When, however, the absolute predestination, of which we have spoken, is carried into the region of individual human accountability and moral agency, it not only ceases to be true, and becomes extravagant and deleterious, but it has not even the letter of a misinterpreted text to support it. It is positively said that God willeth all men to be saved ; but where is it said that he willeth only a part of men to be saved ? If that had been said, it would not have proved that the favoured part must be saved, though it would indeed have followed that the other portion must be lost ; but whilst a hundred plain passages of holy writ declare it to be the will, the purpose, of God, that the whole world should be saved, not one has ever been adduced which, in words as explicit, declares that he wills that any part of it should be lost. All this is inference ; the adroitness of criticism must be resorted to in order to support it ; and even this will not avail, without the aid of metaphysical lucubrations on foreknowledge and the human will. Absolute predestination can have no place, where conditions are imposed upon moral agents ; for that is a contradiction in terms : If there are conditions, there is then free-agency ; for necessity and conditionality are equally contradictory ; and the predestination, or purpose, whichever term is preferred, like that respecting the companions of Paul’s voyage, is not absolute, but dependent upon human choice

and conduct : "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." God predestinates all men to be saved, but with limitation, as the sailors were predestinated to be saved in the ship, not out of it. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "True," the predestinarian will reply, "whosoever God *makes* to believe on him;" but to this we answer, 1. That this is not in the text : 2. That if that interpretation were allowed, the text would be contradicted : God did not in that case love the world, but only that part of it whom he purposed to "make" to believe on his Son.

On the subject of the human will, also, we find the same undesigned conversion of truth into error, by carrying it far beyond its proper limit. The eye of the author glances here also from one extreme to the other, and in its rapidity shoots over the only point on which he could have firmly placed his excellent practical exhortations. The extreme which he rejects is that which represents the will as an independent principle ; that which he chooses is, to consider the will as a merely passive instrument in the hand of God, which he turns at his pleasure, as the planet is directed in its orbit, or as the winds and waves are directed and impelled. We gladly acknowledge as much of truth in this statement as we can find by the most liberal construction. The will of man is not an independent principle. The philosophy which makes it so is bad ; the theology which assumes it, is worse. Perhaps in true philosophy, we could not conceive of an independent will, without conceiving of a being without understanding and without affections ; for wherever there is an understanding to furnish reasons for choice, and affections to supply motives of pleasure or pain, there must be dependency in the will. True theology, also, deprives the will of independence. In our purely natural state we have no will to good ; and if the will is ever inclined to good, that is the result of "power from on high." It is God that worketh in us to will and to do. He gives the power of both, and supplies it to the end. So far we go with Dr. Chalmers ; nay, we will go farther. We deny not that

the will may be powerfully influenced, and probably for the time irresistibly influenced in some cases, through sudden and strong illuminations of the understanding, and through the hopes and the fears which are thereby excited. This takes place in sudden convictions of sin; and in seasons of the mighty pouring out of the special influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus St. Paul, on his way to Damascus, was overwhelmed; thus the hearers of St. Peter at the Pentecost; thus thousands have been quickly turned to the Lord in days of special visitation, and by God's blessing upon the powerful preaching of his word. But there is still "a great gulf" fixed, as to this subject, between us and our author. All experience shows that these mighty influences are not ordinary; that into whatever new state and circumstances of probation they carry men, theirs is a state of probation still; and that every good principle, and good feeling, thus inspired, is so capable of resistance, and the sinfulness and sloth of human nature are so apt to prevail, that even those who have been in this respect most favoured, feel as much need of personal watchfulness, diligence, and every other kind of exertion, as others. Ordinarily, however, the influence of God upon the wills of men is exerted in a less overwhelming manner; both through the external means of the word and ordinances, and by the inward motions of his Spirit upon the thoughts and affections; and both the consciousness of our own minds, and all the exhortations and admonitions of Scripture, prove, that, though this ordinary influence is powerful and sufficient, it is still resistible. The power both to will and to do is of God; the incitement too is from him. Both are, we acknowledge, supplied in various degrees, differing greatly at different times; but they are always sufficiently supplied. God does not, however, will and do, though he worketh in us to those ends; that is our work; which it could not in any sense be, if the real efficient were God, and if the will and active powers of man, as Dr. Chalmers states it, were but mere instruments.

The truth, then, that we acknowledge in Dr. Chalmers's sentiments as to the will is, that all the good which it is capable of choosing, it chooses under the influence of God.

We deny with him an "independent" will ; we acknowledge a solicited, aided, and regenerated will ; but over this limit he bounds, in order to make the will a passive instrument, and the influence of God upon it nothing different from the application of impulse to the mechanism of matter. This is contradicted by common life. Instruction and persuasion are powers which control the will of man ; they often conquer, and effectually subdue it, when struggling and reluctant ; and the greater the power of intelligence, of conviction, and of persuasion, which any individual has in comparison of others, the more command has he over their wills. But who confounds this kind of influence and control over the mind of man, with the power of a General over his troops, or of a master over a slave ? and much less with the power of a mechanist over machinery, the motions of which he impels by a spring, or drives by a weight ? Above all, the whole tenor of Scripture, and the very doctrine of human accountability, disprove the whole theory. God works in man to will and do ; and under that influence only, man both wills and acts, if he does either aright ; yet the volition and the action are so much his own, as to prove that his will is an efficient, though a dependent one, and not an instrument. And suppose that this involves some mystery ; suppose that we can neither clearly conceive how such a divine influence, as secures to God the glory of our salvation, should consist with free agency, nor how the latter can be maintained if the former be allowed to that extent which is unquestionably ascribed to it in the Scripture ; are we, because of the infirmity of our conceptions, to lay down explanatory theories which, if followed out to their fair consequences, would totally nullify the declarations of God ? On the one hand, are we to say that God worketh on the will of man only by the external persuasion of his word, and deny the mighty working of his power in the heart of man, in order that we may save free-will ? And, on the other, in order to keep up the doctrine of an interior agency of God in the understanding, will, and affections of good men, are we to assimilate his agency in the soul to the energy of his operations on natural objects which have no intelligence, or which

are not reasonable and accountable; and thus not only make our theory contradict the Scriptures, which assign a real spontaneity and activity to the will of man, and not a delusive appearance of it, but also, by the dangerous logical consequences which we enable even the most illiterate to draw from our premises, to load revealed religion with dishonourable charges, and set it in opposition to the common sense, and common experience and consciousness of man, and to all the moral perfections of God? For the philosophy which walks with revelation into all her beauteous paths of holiness, justice, and mercy, and gives glory to God, and sheds benevolence on man, we thank every man whose intellect has created, or whose fancy has adorned, it; and to few are our obligations more due than to our author; but science is most unfortunately employed, if, in driving out roads in new courses, it heaps up the soil on the beaten track, obliterates the direction of the very King's highway, and converts it into a quagmire.

It is in no spirit of captiousness, or from undue bias in favour of our own opinions, we trust, that we have made these remarks. Had we felt less admiration of the author, and been less anxious that his earnest and most important labours, in the cause of vital and practical religion, should be crowned with full success, we might have abstained from them. They have been called forth also by the value we place upon the volume before us, which we could not so earnestly recommend to the perusal of our readers, as it deserves to be recommended, without pointing out the counteracting principles to its usefulness, contained, as we conscientiously think, in the eleventh sermon. Our objections against that sermon will not, we hope, induce any of our readers to forget the terms of high commendation in which we have felt it our pleasing duty to characterize the volume at large. In the rest of the discourses, generally, we go on with the author, not only without hesitation, but with delight and edification. The metaphysics of system are not suffered to intrude upon them. In the ample range of established scriptural truth, the author expands his thoughts and feelings,—whether the love of Christ, the freeness of the Gospel, or human duty and exertion be the

subject,—with unchecked energy ; and in his mighty march leads us into fields as brilliant with the strong illuminations of truth, as they are made beautiful by the creations of his powerful and consecrated imagination. How intent the Preacher is upon the salvation of his hearers, every sermon bears witness ; and how little the theoretic principles contained in the discourse on which we have animadverted affect his feelings, his hopes, his pleadings, and practical addresses, the sermon on “the Sin against the Holy Ghost” is a striking evidence. We do not, indeed, at all agree with him in his view of that dire offence ; we think it a specific crime, confined to the age of miracles only, and perhaps to the miracles wrought by our Lord in person ; though there may be awful and highly perilous approximations to it in every age. But we have seldom met with appeals to the heart so powerful, and exhortations so pressing, as that discourse contains, to an immediate repentance, an instant compliance with the present calls of God, and a prompt acceptance of the salvation of Christ, as offered by the Gospel, and by the Holy Spirit, secretly stirring the conscience, and alluring the affections. Such preaching cannot fail of its effect ; because it cannot fail of the divine blessing ; and our earnest prayer is, that the excellent author may long live to employ his great talents in the church of God, with a spirit unabated in its ardour, and a success commensurate with his earnest endeavours to secure it.

## REVIEW IX.

*The Christian Philosopher ; or the Connexion of Science with Religion. With an Appendix, containing Notes and Illustrations. Illustrated with an Engraving. By Thomas Dick. 12mo. Pp. 444. 7s. Edinburgh. 1823.*

“THE works of the Lord are great, sought out of them that have pleasure therein.” They declare “his eternal power and Godhead,” and give testimony to his “faithfulness.” The connexion of the knowledge of nature with religion and piety is, therefore, a matter determined less by reasoning than by authority ; the authority of Him who hath set his glory above the heavens, and made the earth full of his goodness, that men “might fear before him,” and offer “the sacrifice of thanksgiving.” In modern times, at least, natural philosophy, or the knowledge of the visible works of God, has too often been disconnected with sentiments of religion, and, not unfrequently, been arrayed in opposition to it. We cannot conceive, indeed, a sight more pitiable on earth than that of a man endowed with a cultivated reason, and accustomed to patient and extensive research, wandering from day to day amidst the grandeurs of the universe, penetrating the wonderful construction of its minutest parts with assiduous attention, and marking their connexion with the production, conservation, and enjoyment of myriads of sentient beings, without any devout thoughts of God, the Maker and Preserver of them all, and never, by reflection, rendering these discoveries subservient to moral ends. This is so far from being an imaginary case, that by far the greater part of those who have devoted themselves to philosophic pursuits, in modern times, have given no indication whatever of a devout spirit ; and it is notorious, that books of science have generally avoided, with apparent design and care, every observation or allusion, which might expose the writer to a sneer as a religionist or a fanatic.

The marked distinction, in point of moral tone, between the philosophic writings of the last half-century, and those of Bacon, Newton, and Boyle, must frequently have been noticed; and to us this general indifference of philosophic men to religion, is one of the strongest evidences of the natural enmity of the carnal heart against God, and proves that philosophic knowledge has, in no case, of itself, the least power to create right and truly religious feelings. That is reserved for a class of truths which take immediate hold of the fears and the hopes of man; and which show him, not what is without him in the material world, however vast and impressive, but what is within him,—the state of his heart, and his alienated condition from God.

To this indifference or hostility of scientific men to religion, there have been, however, many honourable exceptions; and, knowing to how much good or evil, especially among young persons, philosophical knowledge may be turned, we saw with pleasure a new publication with the title, “The Christian Philosopher,” professing to connect the works of God with their Author, and to unfold the moral instruction which they were intended, in his mercy, to convey. In this work we have been both gratified and disappointed; and that in no ordinary degree. Mr. Dick is well acquainted with subjects of natural philosophy; and he has great talent in conveying general and connected views of the magnificent scenes and relations of nature, and of those delicate and beautiful exhibitions of the skill of the heavenly Architect with which the world abounds. But he has mixed up his subjects with much irrelevant matter, and has assumed some false principles.

Mr. Dick’s book does not supply a desideratum, which has long been felt,—an elementary treatise on natural science, which should lead the student in his progress to mark the connexion of the works of God’s hand with those of his heart, that is, with the revelation which he has made of himself in the Scriptures, and the redemption of the human part of his creation by the blood of his Son. “The Christian Philosopher” is a work on that mixed subject which has been usually called “Natural Theology;” and in such an undertaking its author had



to come into comparison with Derham, and Ray, and Sturm, and, above all, with Paley. So far as the philosophy of his book is concerned, he maintains very respectable ground ; but we have in it no train of argument connected with great consequences, as in Paley, to give it the strength and the interest of unity. The theology is rather a congeries of reflections, and what, in a sermon, would be called moral improvements, uses, and applications ; which, though often striking, and not seldom important, yet, by their reiteration in this unconnected form, are, at length, felt to be rather forced and cumbrous.

The great reason of the structure and the faults of this volume is, however, to be found in the views with which Mr. Dick set out on his enterprise. We have just lamented the too general indifference of men of science to religion, which we take to be one of the greatest and most obvious evils of the age. Mr. Dick overlooks this, and is filled with resentment at the indifference of the professors and teachers of religion to philosophy. The former are, in his view, in consequence, deplorably ignorant and narrow-minded ; and the latter, he thinks, neglect one of the most powerful means of enlightening and raising the religious tone of their congregations, and confine themselves rather to abstract topics, which are quite powerless in comparison of "Descants on the Creation." We, however, do Mr. Dick the justice to say, that he not only appears to be a believer in revelation, but a devout and religious man.

As to the first topic of his constant complaint, we are persuaded that he is much mistaken. What his acquaintance with professors of religion may be, we know not. He may have unhappily moved in a peculiar circle of religionists, of oddly constructed minds ; or, what is more likely, he has inferred very unfavourably concerning them, in consequence of their not meeting his enthusiastic passion for natural philosophy with equal warmth. But the fact is, that no books, not directly theological, are more popular among religious people in the three kingdoms, none are more steadily kept in print, none pass more rapidly from edition to edition, than those which treat of the works of God, in connexion with religion

We might instance the *Astro and Physico Theology* of Derham; the *Meditations* of Hervey; the *Reflections* of Sturm; the *Natural Theology* of Paley; Chalmers's *Astronomical Discourses*; and several others. The reading of these is chiefly confined to professors of religion; and the demand for them shows the extent to which they are studied, and the interest they excite. Mr. Dick's rebukes on this subject are, therefore, wholly misplaced.

That Ministers might render their sermons more impressive and edifying, by making them philosophical, in the manner which Mr. Dick proposes, we more than doubt. The Ministers whom our author has heard seem to have been much of the same class with his religious associates; but he has, unfortunately, concluded, that the fault of making no allusion to the works of God in sermons is general. We believe not. They furnish, in a thousand instances, every Sabbath, interesting allusions, impressive figures, and means of illustration, to the Ministers of our country, by which, in their proper connexion with other truths, knowledge is enlarged, and religious feelings are deepened.

But even though Mr. Dick's mistakes, arising from his want of acquaintance with the religious world, may be thus corrected, we fear that his censures are grounded less on his want of information as to facts, than upon erroneous opinions respecting the efficacy of natural science as a medium of religious impression. This is obvious from his book. He constantly assumes, that were nature only displayed, and, by ingenious illustrations, such as he has undoubtedly the talent, in no ordinary degree, of supplying, presented under impressive views, men must be made humble, and devout, and pure. On this point we are sceptical, or rather, quite incredulous. For if this were true, we should find the greatest philosophers to be the best Christians; and so powerful an instrument of conversion and edification would scarcely have remained unrecommended in the New Testament. We rather take it, that the impression of awe from what is great in nature,—or the pleasures of taste, which its beauty, and harmony, and delicacy, will generally produce,—are no more in themselves

moral or religious impressions, than those produced by mere musical sounds ; though, when united with those truths along with which the Holy Spirit gives his testimony, and with which he connects his influences as the Spirit of Christ, they may be, and often are, turned to good account in the Christian life. It may also be much doubted whether philosophic disquisitions in the pulpit, or any where else, are not much less powerful, than that general observation of nature, to which the unlearned are quite adequate, but which can scarcely be called philosophical. Even the book of God usually edifies by general views of its plain and obvious truths ; and what more is brought out, by criticism, produces effect rather in the closet than in the pulpit. When we begin to calculate and arrange as to the material universe, the impression is weakened rather than rendered more intense. To call the mind of an audience, by a single sentence, to the ample sweep of the cope of heaven, and its furniture of stars, as popularly conceived, conveys an impression more sublime than would be produced by an enumeration of the distances of the stars in millions of miles, and an account of the laws of the astral revolutions, which should occupy an hour. To direct the thoughts to the sea, rolling in grandeur, would seize the imagination ; to calculate the momentum of its billows, and the leagues of its surface, would dissipate the charm, by calling another faculty into exercise. Preachers of the Gospel must be Preachers of Christ, or they forfeit their character. They must, like St. Paul, know nothing else, as the great subject of their preaching. So far as a display of the power and wisdom of God in the creation can subserve that, well ; but it must never displace it, nor drive it into a corner ; no, not in a single sermon, addressed to dying men, whose breath is in their nostrils.

We have another fault with Mr. Dick. He blames Paley for being a plagiarist ; but is himself more eminently and obviously so. We do not make this remark in order to blame either. They have each borrowed well ; Paley eminently so. The fact is, that none but very weak men would attempt to write a book on any important branch of general knowledge,

without carefully consulting preceding writers. There is nothing new under the sun, but method and illustration. This is as true of nonsense as of sense; its circle is more irregular, but it moves round it. There are only two methods open to a writer; either to put his extracts from his masters between honest quotation-marks, or to melt down their sayings into the mass of his own paragraphs. Whenever the book of another writer is really before an author, we should prefer to see the former mode adopted. But authors are generally deterred from this, because the folly of many readers would consider it as a proof of their want of originality, if many professed quotations, however appropriate, were found in their productions; and thus the latter mode is generally preferred, though it can take in none but the half-thinking reader, who looks grave, and surrenders himself to the deception with an air of wisdom. Authors who thus practise upon their readers ought not, however, to quarrel with each other; but rather, if we may use so homely a phrase, “eat their pudding, and hold their tongues.”

We have now done with censure, though many things are open to animadversion; and the selections we shall make from Mr. Dick's labours, shall all be from the best parts of the volume. Our readers will join us in pronouncing them so very good, as to make it desirable that the volume in which they occur should have been quite without exception.

Freed from the complaints which Mr. Dick is constantly reiterating against the narrow views of those who are not quite so sanguine as himself, as to the direct moral effects of philosophic knowledge, “The Christian Philosopher” would be a very interesting addition to our standard works on natural theology. And we trust that the author will construct his second edition entirely on his own system, and leave it to find its way naturally, without attempting to drive a road for it through a portion of religious science which is perfectly distinct, and without obtruding it as affording materials indispensable for the adequate discharge of the office of a Christian Preacher.

## REVIEW X.

*The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns. Nos. I. to VIII.*  
*By Thomas Chalmers, D.D., Minister of St. John's Church, Glas-*  
*gow. 8vo. Pp. 358. 8s. 6d., boards.*

THIS is the first volume of a work still in the process of publication, in the form of quarterly numbers ; but the present volume is complete in itself, as far as relates to the important concern of suggesting an efficient plan for carrying the moral and saving influence of Christianity into every dark walk of ignorance and vice, which may exist in the large towns of the empire.

Part of this volume relates more immediately to Scotland, part to the church of which Dr. Chalmers is so distinguished a Minister, but much more to the nation at large, and to all who by profession, or the impulses of religious charity and zeal, are engaged in promoting its "instruction in righteousness," the elevation of its morals, and the advancement of its happiness.

In bringing this work before our readers, we shall first consider what the author offers in explanation of its main design, leaving some of the subjects into which he has made very instructive digressions for subsequent notice.

No man can be a true believer in Christianity, who does not admit its complete moral efficacy to accomplish the purposes of its Author ; to dissipate the most accumulated ignorance ; to put to shame the boldest vices ; to correct the most corrupt state of society ; to wrestle with and subdue the most inveterate aberrations of the human heart from truth, justice, and holiness.

If, in countries where it has long existed, these mighty effects have been but partially developed, and a great part of society is seen wandering through the paths of various evil,

as though quite out of the sphere of its influence, and is, in consequence, sunk into a misery almost as extreme, as though the divine benevolence had made no provision for the fallen condition of man, it becomes a subject of natural inquiry, whether that remedy, in which most confidence has been placed, has in point of fact the efficacy usually ascribed to it ; or whether it has been adulterated ; or whether it has been at all, or carefully, applied to the case.

There are too many instances of entire cure, in individuals at least, to allow us to assume the first ; as to the second, an adulterated medicine does exist ; but the genuine one is not lost, as appears from many sufficiently attested cases of relief or cure ; and if moral disease still rages, and, in certain districts, spreads its most concentrated contagion, and displays its most affecting desolations, the fair inference is, that such districts have been too much neglected by those in whose hands this powerful panacea has been deposited. The great questions, therefore, before the Christian philanthropist relate to the opportunities which may exist for a more extensive application of it, and to that process which promises the most successful results. Both these questions find ample answers in the work before us. This powerful writer, who lately conducted the sublime march of his readers amidst the rolling planets, and the gorgeous plains of the wide-spread firmament, in search of the magnificence of Deity, now leads us through the crowded alleys and streets of overgrown towns and cities, in search of the miseries of men. Nor is the moral he would impress upon us less powerful ; he displays their squalid wretchedness, and their affecting alienation from good, that he may appeal to the charity of our hearts, remind us that we have the infallible remedy in our hands, and urge us, by every motive of Christian obligation, to apply it in those methods which practical wisdom has pointed out as the most effectual.

In the contemplation of a large town, facts present themselves, from which, however painful, we must not turn aside ; a state of things which, if neglected, will ultimately force itself upon us by its disastrous consequences, and convince

us that to shut our eyes upon danger is not the way to avoid it, and that to "pass by on the other side," is not only want of charity, but want of wisdom. Christianity is generally professed among us; yet her Sabbaths are profaned, and her temples deserted, by the great mass of the population. Copies of the book of God are multiplied; but thousands want the heart or the ability to consult it. Schools are multiplied; yet we are horror-struck at the reports made from time to time of juvenile depravity. A greater number of agencies have been of late years set at work, to counteract vice; yet our calendars show an increase of crime. Immense sums are expended in private and public charities; yet the forms of misery multiply around us. That great legal charity, the poor-rates, has extorted its ample taxation for the relief of the necessitous, the aged, and the sick; but a spirit of pauperism has grown up with the facilities of obtaining relief, until it has created constant and agitating contests between the efficient administrator of the bounty, and the sturdy and demanding claimant. Large wages have at different times, and often for long periods, been earned by the poor; but too generally they have made no provision for temporary reverses; and a pressure on commerce, for a few years, has at once spread misery and murmuring through the working classes, disposed them to riot and rebellion, and rendered them a prey to every designing demagogue who could mislead their ignorance, or had the address to practise upon their passions. Feelings of enmity to the higher classes have been generated; airy schemes of government, holding out false hopes, have become the subjects of popular discussion and attachment; and, with all this, infidelity has insinuated itself, and destroyed what remained of moral principle, in those who caught the contamination. Regard for character has been sunk in proportion; the ambition of cleanliness, comfort, and appearance, among many of the poor, has been annihilated; with these spurs to industry and economy has passed away a prudent regard to the future; and inconsiderate marriages, and a profligate expenditure of money when in possession, have been the results.

In Scotland, perhaps, such a picture may be the representation only of the larger and manufacturing towns. In England, we see, it is true, in such places, the evil, in its more concentrated virulence, and amplified more fully into all the foregoing particulars; but we cannot generally except even our villages and smaller towns. Ignorance, irreligion, the profanation of the Sabbath, neglect of worship, crimes, the spirit of pauperism, improvidence, profligacy, disregard to character, and other moral evils, exist in full proportion in them; though political evil may not be so manifest, and from various circumstances has not been so fully introduced, and especially in those parts of the country whose inhabitants are occupied in agriculture.

What is the cause of this state of things? "Religious fanaticism," say some: "The diffusion of education," say others. The point, however, is touched by neither. It is singular that what is generally meant by fanaticism, by those who talk most vehemently about it, is that very theological system which they themselves profess to reverence in their own religious formularies, fully drawn out, and earnestly impressed upon others; and yet, if the fanaticism charged were as objectionable in reality as in their opinions, it would be little culpable, as to the point now under consideration. For the evils complained of are not found, or not exclusively found, among reported fanatics; but, at least with us in England, chiefly among a class of persons who have no ideas at all on religious subjects, because they have never occupied their thoughts.

When those evils are charged upon education, that education is usually meant which is communicated to the poor, by the efforts of the more zealous members of the Establishment, by the Methodists, and by the several bodies of Dissenters, in Sunday-schools. Now, we are far from supposing, that all the good has been produced by these institutions of which they are capable, or that all who have received instruction in them have escaped the evils before mentioned as actually existing among us. But it is indubitable, that the increase of juvenile crime and depravity, for instance, has been among those chiefly who have had no such care bestowed upon them; and that the



great mass of those adults whose vices and whose wretchedness blot and shame our cities, towns, and villages, are unaccustomed to the public worship of God, unacquainted with the Scriptures, and equally ignorant and neglected.

So little conviction will be carried to the mind of any considerate person, by the allegation of fanaticism and education, as the causes of a state of society, in our large towns especially, which all lament, that the investigation may be considered as still fairly open ; and it would be well, if, instead of indulging in the railings of religious bitterness on any side, the subject were weighed with the most dispassionate seriousness, and that all religious bodies, particularly, should become willing to promote each other's agency, wherever it appears effectually to exert itself against vice and misery, as a matter of common interest and concern to all. The great reason of the evils complained of is, the non-application of Christianity, on a scale sufficiently extensive, to our national ignorance and vices, and to that wretchedness which is consequent upon them, and therefore capable of being greatly assuaged, or entirely removed.

On this subject it ought to be remembered, that Christianity is not always applied, even when there is the outward show of its apparatus and operation. The work of evangelizing the world was laid upon the Ministers of Christ by their Master, at his ascension ; and with them the great power of moving the moral mass still rests, by the doctrines they teach, and by the institution of religious societies, whose exertions they are to head, direct, and encourage. But if any great portion of them have taught a defective, and therefore an enfeebled, and almost powerless system of religion, we can account, without much difficulty, for ignorance being left to darken, and vice to radicate and ramify. If also it should be found, that, where this evil does not exist, (one of the greatest which can befall a country professing Christianity,) even enlightened and zealous Ministers have been prevented by their own fears, or the prejudices of their order, from encouraging the efforts of pious agents, in offices subordinate to those which are peculiar to the Christian Priesthood ; in teaching the uninstructed the elements of religious knowledge, and advising them on

their best interests ; in praying in the cottages of the poor and by the beds of the sick ; and in conducting schools, whose main object should be moral correction, and the diffusion of religious influence ; we are brought by this neglect, or by the operation of these fears, to precisely the same conclusion. Christianity, even when it exists in the understanding and heart of the Minister, is non-applied, because his work has swelled beyond his personal ability, and he has not supplied the want by subordinate agents.

It will be sufficiently in time to discuss the question, as to the efficiency of Christianity to moralize and to save, when it has been actually brought to bear upon collective society. It is not enough to say, that the kingdom is divided into parishes, and that a Minister of religion is appointed to each ; with a vast array of Preachers of other denominations. The fact remains, the majority have not been taught religion at all ; and of those who have been taught it, many have been defectively or erroneously taught. For if they have been led to depend upon the efficacy of sacraments, and the merit of mere ceremonial observances ; and if Christian morals have been enjoined upon them separate from those Christian motives, which alone can give vitality and power to doctrine, by seizing the conscience and the affections, by raising a devotional spirit, and connecting the weakness of man with a mighty and redeeming working of the power of God in his heart, drying up there the fountain of corruption, and breaking open the source of a pure and living stream ; the religion of Christ, as it is contained in the New Testament, has not been developed to the majority of the people of this country, and has not been impressed upon them. We have an Establishment, which has embodied in her liturgy and her articles of faith, generally speaking, a just interpretation of the Scriptures ; we have a great body of Methodists and Dissenters, who, on all essential points, agree with that Establishment ; yet far, very far, are we from a consummation which all ought most devoutly to wish, that these doctrines should be fixed in the minds of all our youth, and kept to the ear of all our adult poor, in every street and alley of our towns, and in every village of our

empire. The reason, therefore, why the disease rages is most obvious,—the remedy prescribed by Heaven itself, and on which alone we have been commanded to depend, has not been applied. This incontrovertible fact, joined with the obvious and long-tried effects produced by the plain, faithful, and affectionate inculcation of the word of God “in truth,” speaks in useful and impressive admonition to those in every rank, to whom a greater or a less share of influence has been assigned by Providence for promoting the morals and religion of the country ; to our Rulers, as it points out to them those men, in the national Church, whose promotion to its highest order may most secure the purposes for which that Establishment was instituted ; to our Prelates, as it indicates the description of Clergy to whom the solemn trust of a nation’s instruction ought to be confided ; to those who have patronage, and are bound at their peril, and as they must answer for it to the great Shepherd at his appearing, to regard it as a talent committed to them, to be employed, not merely for secular benefit, but for the higher purpose of the country’s instruction in righteousness ; to Ministers themselves, as it displays a field white to the harvest, into which all might, by renewed effort, extend their holy labours ; and to serious Christians of every name, who are called to “lift up their eyes,” and behold, with due concern and sympathy, these fields thus ripe for hopeful labour, but for the reaping of which the number of labourers is far too few, that they may be excited thereby more earnestly to “pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth his labourers.”

Moral and political evils are inseparably involved ; and, on this account, nothing is more necessary to statesmen and to political economists than a knowledge of the character, and real influence, of genuine Christianity. By a silent operation, and by methods undignified by the technicality of science, it works out, and infallibly works out, wherever it prevails, all the ends of good government, and all the results of the science of political economy,—morals, industry, frugality, submission to the laws, character, cleanliness, health, and such like ; and it does all this on principles which human laws can so little

influence, that it may be said, with the Apostle, "the law was not made for the righteous." In the effectual application of Christianity to the hearts and lives of men, Government has in fact a deeper interest than in any thing else. The same may be said in reference to political economy. We do not mean to assert that this science is useless. It may direct efforts, where it cannot create the principle from which they must spring; it may place in the strong light of an injurious general effect, some practice which might otherwise be considered as an isolated evil, but which, even when thus exposed, it wants the power to restrain, if left to itself. Though this may be acknowledged, and though we think, with Dr. Chalmers, that the usefulness of a Minister, and of other active religious philanthropists, may often be promoted by some acquaintance with the best-assured and leading principles of this science, yet it is mere intellectual play, without the operating and corrective influence of religion. Could the great principle of judicial astrology be demonstrated, still all its former calculations would be vitiated by the now known existence of planets in our system, the influence of which could not formerly be estimated, because they were not discovered. And whatever projects the economist may indulge in, for bettering the condition of the poor, in like manner they will be disturbed and vitiated, if he take not into the account the moral counteractions he must contend with, and do not resort to the only effectual means by which they are to be controlled. We send both the statesman, and the political economist, to their New Testament; because neither class can dispense safely either with its light or power. Let us look at the great question of the Poor-Laws. They have been injurious in their operation by encouraging the spirit of dependence, improvidence, and pauperism. Perhaps the remedy of the economist is, to abolish them; and all who have felt the pressure of this burden will echo the sentence, from the very principle of selfishness. What then would be the result? The truly distressed must starve, or be thrown upon the charity of those who are charitable on principle, to the injury, no doubt of all those great moral charities which they now

sustain by their benevolence, whilst the obdurate and the selfish would escape. The mere political economist has no other remedy; except he would substitute a pinching regulation of the institution, for its entire subversion. But he who takes Christianity into account, as that agent of moral reform on which he can most depend, has the means of removing the evil. What is the spirit of pauperism? Dishonesty, idleness, improvidence, disregard of character, want of affection for children,—moral evils, which cannot submit to a scientific or a political cure, (any more than atrophy can be cured by a regimen proper for fever,) but must have a moral one. We mention the Poor-Laws only *exempli gratiâ*; the same observations may be applied to every other part of this now fashionable study, which respects questions bound up with moral habits.

The effect of true Christianity, when applied by a faithful Christian Labourer, to bring out the results contemplated by the economist, and that by its natural process, is stated by Dr. Chalmers with great force and eloquence.

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Dr. Chalmers instances “the solid, regular, and well-doing peasantry of Scotland,” who act upon the best principles of this science, without any knowledge of its philosophic principles, or lengthened reasonings; and we might instance thousands of the families of the poor in our own country, among whom, by the sole effect of Christian teaching, darkness has been turned to light, confusion to order, shamelessness to character, squalidness to decency, improvidence to frugality, imprudence to foresight, and sloth to industry.

What follows from all this? Let us no longer despise the philosophy, the deep and divine philosophy, of religion. Instead of looking so much to human laws and science, let us act as though we believed “the Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation,” bringing vitality to our plans, and efficiency to our regulations. Let us, instead of useless laments over the obstinacy of the disease, free ourselves from the guilt of not assisting in the healing process; let religious instruction be encouraged; let Ministers be stimulated to zeal; let

every pious agent be set to work, with all his faith in God, and glowing charity to man ; let a general and an offensive warfare, with the weapons which the armoury of God furnishes, be carried on in every place ; let it be sustained with perseverance, softened by meekness, and guided by that true Christian prudence, which tempers without enervating the zeal which is indispensable to the effort ; and, by God's blessing, a very different state of things will arise, and the honours which have accrued to the Gospel of Christ from individual conquests, will be equally commanding and conspicuous in those which it shall achieve over the evils of collective society. But if Statesmen continue to place their hope in political theories, and economists in the speculations of merely human philosophy ; if Prelates think they fulfil their high office in weaving strainers fine enough to arrest in their progress into the church every straw and mote of doctrinal aberration, comparatively regardless of the great and high attributes of the ministerial character ; if Ministers content themselves with the accustomed round of demanded duty, and never, like their Master, seek, that they may save, that which is lost ; if the different sects are more alive to that which concerns a party interest, or gratifies a party feeling, than to those great purposes for which, if they have any claim to be considered as churches of Christ, they ought daily to care ; we shall be miserably deceived by the apparent spread of religious influence. One part of society, at least, must remain under the decomposing process of vice and ignorance, aggravating its own corruption, and giving birth to those enormous vices, and astounding deformities, which the arm of law is evidently becoming too feeble to restrain.

Some of the great truths at which we have glanced in the foregoing observations are enforced by Dr. Chalmers with an energy of style, and a felicity of illustration, to which we have no pretence ; and because of their importance, we think it an exceedingly happy circumstance that they have been brought under the public consideration by an author of so great a reputation, who cannot be read without commanding attention. The work before us is, however, of a practical character, and shows, not only what duty to our country demands of us as

patriots and as Christians; (itself of no inconsiderable importance;) nor only that it is within the compass of practicability to perform it; but in what manner the more effectual and extensive application of Christianity to remove the existing evils of society may be effected. Dr. Chalmers exhibits what has been done under his own eye, by way of experiment; and he shows, that, notwithstanding every allowance which may be demanded for local circumstances, the same method, at least in its principle, is of universal adaptation. It is the practical and stirring nature of this volume which renders it one of the most important works that has, for many years, issued from the press.

The division of the country into parishes was one of the wise provisions of our ancestors to secure the religious instruction of the whole people; and if, in every parish, there were a Minister sufficiently devoted to his work, and adequately qualified for it, we know not that any thing more could be desired. In parishes of moderate size, at least, there could then be no complaint of ignorance or neglect; Christianity would then, to use Dr. Chalmers's expression, "pervade" the whole mass; the children would be catechized, the negligent and vicious reproved, the poor consoled, the sick visited, and to all would the Gospel be preached. Some of those happily circumstanced village-parishes in England and Scotland, where most religious influence has been exerted by an enlightened and laborious ministry, appear to have been in the author's recollection, when forming that contrast between them and the scene of his present labours, which has given birth to the work under consideration. If they were the reverse of each other in their moral condition, the difference in the moral advantages, enjoyed by the inhabitants of such villages, and those afforded to a city-parish, stretched beyond the bounds contemplated at its formation, was not less obvious and impressive. In the one, the Minister was seen in familiar and pastoral intercourse with his flock; in the other, the great majority of the parishioners were strangers to their spiritual instructor. In one, the village-school dispensed a sufficient share of learning to all; in the other, such institutions were

too limited to benefit, perhaps, a twentieth part. In one, the people were constantly in the presence of the sanctifying truth and high moral standard of religion ; in the other, they were huddled together in the seclusion of lanes and alleys, and crowded dwellings, one element of ignorance and depravity acting upon another, and all out of the range of the operation of good example and hallowing precept. The practical conclusions to which our author would, therefore, conduct us, are these, and they rest not so much upon reasoning, as upon experience ; assimilate the city to the village, by dividing it into sections ; let every section of the city be as fully pervaded by religious instruction as the village ; in parishes too extensive to be cultivated by the personal labours of their Ministers, let a division be made, and the number of churches multiplied, and subordinate agents, of character and piety, be also appointed for the instruction of the ignorant poor, by Sabbath-schools, and friendly advice ; and lest the effect should be lost by dissipating itself over too wide a surface, let both churches, district-schools, and Sabbath-schools, be provided, according to the demands of the population, and let the agents attempt no more than they are able effectually to perform. The last is, that great principle of "locality," which the author so forcibly inculcates.

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Whilst Dr. Chalmers so ably points out the means by which, through the multiplication of churches, the division of parishes, and the establishment of District and Sabbath-schools, the truths of our holy religion may be more generally diffused, and made to bear directly upon the hearts and lives of the whole population of the country, it will be observed throughout the whole, that so far is he from supposing that efficient and moral effects can result from the mere communication of the elements of human learning, separate from the direct inculcation of religious doctrines and motives, that he scarcely glances at an opinion which, on this side of the Tweed, has had so many abettors, and which has insensibly enfeebled many school-institutions among us, that have set out, and been, indeed, carried on, under other professions.



His District-schools, to meet the wants of the youth of large towns, are supposed to be conducted upon the old and tried plan of his country ; his Sabbath-schools are to be carried on by pious agents, who are supposed to exert themselves to bring the minds of their charge under religious influence, and to form in them the habit of keeping holy the Sabbath-day, and of attending the services of the house of God ; and the whole is further supposed to be under the natural and proper superintendence of the Ministers of God's word, to direct, encourage, control, and to attach to their congregations, and the church of Christ, the children thus instructed, as they may actually benefit by a ministry for which they are prepared, and to which they are accustomed to attend. It is the merit of Dr. Chalmers's work, to adopt nothing new as to principles ; but to bring out those which the authority of Christianity has sanctioned, and which experience has confirmed, in the fulness of their proof, and the amplitude of their application ; and thus to set the heart and the hand to work, rather than engage the understanding to compose and measure the pillars upon which he would call the energies of the wise and good, of all ranks, to erect the superstructure of a national reformation. The soil on which he composed these eloquent and powerful discussions gave him, in this respect, no small advantage. In Scotland, education, intimately and inseparably connected with religion, was not to be begun, but only extended : its moral effects had not to be referred to the class of probable results, but to be appealed to as facts of history. Instruction in religion by an ample catechism, (the Assembly's,) which, whatever objection may be taken to some of its doctrines, must be acknowledged to be drawn up with great ability, and well calculated to lead to the knowledge of the Scriptures, had been more extended in that than any other Protestant country ; the pastoral office had been more diligently fulfilled ; preaching, as an ordinance of God, had been more encouraged and practised ; respect to the Sabbath, and attendance at public worship, had been formed more effectually into the general habit of the people ; and a knowledge of the Scriptures had been more extensively diffused. The

consequence had been, that whilst England presented a population sunk in ignorance and vice, Scotland had exhibited, in the honourable moral story, a race, intelligent, industrious, observant of the forms of religion, and in no inconsiderable degree under their moral influence. With these familiar facts, it would, indeed, have been very inexcusable in the author to have diverged into theory on the subject of national education. England has made some progress, of late years, towards these advantages. But the population of Scotland has now outrun the range of a good system, and the case needed all the zeal and all the talents of Dr. Chalmers to awaken attention to the fact, and to call forth a commensurate effort; and in no period of our history has the population of England been placed within the reach of adequate, or nearly adequate, instruction. Our national catechism, excellent in many particulars, is too brief and defective to convey even the outline of the doctrine of Christ; it has been, too, very partially taught. The great body of the poor, before the institution of Sunday-schools, were unable to read the Scriptures, and in many counties still remain so; and above all, (and we mention it with sorrowful regret, and not for the purpose of detraction,) the churches, from the Restoration, and through the blind policy then pursued, have been generally supplied with a Clergy, not deficient in learning, but greatly defective or erring, as theologians, (the doctrines of their own Church being judges,) and criminally negligent of the great duties of the pastoral office. From the proneness of men to fall into extremes, preaching itself, which had been made every thing during the reign of Presbyterianism in this country, fell into contempt, and till lately seems not to have made any progress in the opinion of the Clergy themselves, as the main instrument by which their ministry was to be effectual to the conversion of men. If, therefore, we have not seen more clearly marked the dependence of education upon religious influence for its efficiency, and have been more liable to think and act with too great a laxity on this subject, a reason is not wanting. And yet the example of Scotland was not too far off for observation; exceptions of a very strik-

ing kind have occurred in our country ; and the abstract truth itself, founded on the doctrines of the Bible, was not very recondite. Some of the errors on the subject of education, however, have had their day ; and we are glad to remark an altered tone of sentiment in many persons, which will prepare them to receive the greater benefit from such a work as that before us, both as it tends to arouse endeavour, and to give to it a right direction.

We have just adverted to the numerous Sunday-schools established within the last thirty years in this country, as supplying, though not adequately, yet to a very gratifying extent, the national destitution ; and too much cannot be said in praise of the zeal and liberality with which they have been conducted and supported. It is, indeed, a reflection calculated to convey the richest pleasure to every pious heart, that in these institutions a countless number of children have, within the period of their operation, been qualified to read the Scriptures, imbued with the elements of religious knowledge, habituated to respect the sacred day, and its sacred ordinances, and prepared to derive an advantage from the ministrations of the word of God, which they had not otherwise possessed. Sunday-schools have made a powerful moral impression upon great masses of the populace, whatever ignorance and vice may, after all, remain. But their very efficiency has been derived, not from the circumstance of their giving mere elemental and useful scholarship, but from their intimate connexion with religion. The conductors have been, in, we hope, the majority of instances, pious ; excellent catechisms have been taught in many of them ; much truth has been treasured up in the minds of the children, by the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, which they have joined in singing, and committed to memory ; many affectionate exhortations have been given them ; their parents have been sought out, and invited to places of worship ; and thus various means of direct moral influence, springing from the warm charity of those who have loved them for Christ's sake, and which could not fail to make a strong impression upon their hearts, have been applied, to promote ends higher than cold institu-

tions for elementary education alone could either propose or reach.

It must, however, be confessed, that the very advantages produced by these institutions have been often misleading. They have been defended, too, against their adversaries, on principles which are not, in their full extent, tenable. Education, in the opinion of many, who forgot how much religious influence had been brought to bear upon these institutions, was to effect every thing which either the philanthropist or the Christian could require. The mind would be awakened from its torpor, and the character would be elevated, by the process of stringing syllables, and mastering the Reading made Easy. The capacity to read being given to the children, it was concluded that the Bible, of course, would become their companion, and the house of God, in maturer years, their constant resort. These notions have, in many schools, insensibly led to the neglect of direct and patient endeavours to fill the minds of the scholars with religious truth, and carefully to form their habits, from their first exercise, to reverence the Sabbath, and to feel the obligations of public worship. This, it has been thought, would follow, in time, from education; and, therefore, the great effort has often been to crowd as much education into that "sweet hour of prime," as its short duration would admit; as though a religious future habit could flow from any thing but a religious early habit; and the corruption of the heart be more easily conquered by the pulpit, if left unchecked by the discipline of the school. Hence, much of golden opportunity has been lost, and much of the very time of Sunday secularized and desecrated. In some schools the process of tuition has been going on in the very hours of divine service on the Sabbath forenoon, and both children and teachers, (often serious young people, who most needed the instructions and influence of the pulpit,) kept away from it. Here, then, education has not merely been unconnected with religion, but conducted under circumstances calculated to impress the young with an opinion, that the public worship of Almighty God was but a secondary concern, to be neglected not only with impunity, but with applause.

Nor is this the worst of those errors in practice which have crept in. The principle of the superior importance of secular education to every thing beside has led to the neglect, in many schools, of catechetical instruction ; writing, and even accounts, have had their portion of the sacred day assigned to them ; the school-room has been turned into a bazaar for the Sunday sale of copy-books, slates, and pencils, and perhaps, under the idea of sanctifying the whole, of Bibles and Testaments ; and further, that nothing might be wanting to exhibit the evil in its strongest light, the Sunday-school circulating library has, in a few instances, also been opened on the Sabbath for receiving and returning books, with their hire and fines, under the plea of greater convenience. These are lamentable facts, as they have argued great laxity of religious principle, or the presence of very pernicious errors of judgment. That something may be said of these practices is allowed ; for there is no evil for which the human heart, and the father of lies, do not weave its veil of sophistry : But there is no plausible argument in favour of any branch of this secularity, which would not justify the establishment of Sunday-schools for teaching boys to make shoes, and girls to knit. This would be a great charity ; and we know of no better reason urged for the practices we have just censured. The fact, however, is, that the time which can be lawfully occupied by a Sunday-school does not admit of these secular appendages ; and if it did, they would be unlawful. Only out of the hours of divine service, schools on the Sabbath ought to be held ; otherwise, they become a moral nuisance, and ought to be abated ; no Christian man has any right to absent himself habitually from the public worship of God, thus to employ his time ; no young persons, acting as teachers, ought to place themselves in these circumstances, so perilous to the soul ; and all the time which the intervals of worship can allow will be fully occupied in teaching the children to read the Scriptures, in catechetical exercises, and in familiar exhortations ; beyond which, and singing and prayer, nothing ought to be heard or seen in institutions which profess to give a right bias to the youthful mind on subjects of infinite

importance. For who has given the right to the conductors of Sunday-schools to repeal God's everlasting law of the Sabbath; or to substitute empty pleas of "necessity," or "charity," against his declared and explicit will? The value we set upon these institutions, and the happy effects which we have seen result from them, when conducted as so many of them are,—our very anxiety for their success, and that they should not employ themselves in undoing their own work, by breaking the sanction of God's word whilst they profess to recommend it,—have drawn from us these remarks. When disobedience stalks abroad under the garb of charity, it becomes most infectious and dangerous; but the charity is false: It is charity to the body, and cruelty to the soul; it looks at the lower interests of the children, but displaces or enfeebles that pious care for their religious instruction, and to their being trained to sanctifying habits, which is the only efficient agent of Sunday-school instruction. As for all the rest, it may be said, "Who hath required this at your hands?"

The great principle of "locality," which Dr. Chalmers so powerfully impresses upon his readers, is capable of many practical applications. It is not, as a contemporary periodical work has represented it, a new discovery. It would be rather suspicious if it were; and it is, in fact, much more to the praise of the author, that he has taken an old principle, established both by divine authority and human experience, and exhibited its practical bearings upon the highest interests of man, than had he gone forth in search of novelties. This principle, indeed, includes two; the carrying out of the light and influence of Christianity where they are most wanted, and the embodying them in institutions so multiplied, that both may effectually emanate upon the surrounding mass of darkness and vice. On these principles primitive Christianity proceeded to enlighten and bless the world. Its Apostles and Evangelists hastened into regions "where Christ was not named;" and they planted churches, each having perfectly within itself all the orders and institutions of the general church. In large cities, these churches were multiplied, each with its own efficient ministry, and apparatus of ordinances, and each

diffusing through its neighbourhood the radiations of evangelical truth. On these principles the parochial system of national churches was also established; and they formed the great rules according to which the active part of the discipline of our own body was arranged by our venerable Founder. By itinerancy the light was carried forth into almost every part of the land. In every village where the preaching of the Gospel was attended with success, religious societies were formed. In large towns, as our places of worship were multiplied, societies were attached to each. Nor were they designed only to attract; but also to "pervade." In the metropolis, for instance, the number of rooms and small chapels, many of them in the most dissolute and wretched neighbourhoods, far exceeds the larger ones; and in these the Gospel is taken to the very doors of persons who would never have sought it, either in the parish church, or the spacious and elegant chapel. In addition to these, in all our large towns and large villages, meetings for prayer are opened in the houses of such of our members as live in the poorer and most destitute neighbourhoods; and many a wretched wanderer has been induced, by the voice of prayer and praise so near his dwelling, to enter the place, and has been recovered from the error of his way. All experience is in favour of the "aggressive movement" of Christian zeal so well recommended in this work, and the "seeking of them that are lost, that they may be saved;" and though the practice has been long enjoined upon us, by the very nature of our institutions, we are thankful to see it impressed so forcibly upon us, in common with all Christians, in the present work, because we are sure that much remains for us and all others to do, before we can "overtake the mighty extent of our yet unprovided population." In urging forward to so noble an end, every Minister of every denomination, and every denomination of Christians itself, from the Establishments of England and Scotland, down to the feeblest sect, may derive both quickening influence, and the lights of a safe direction in the path of eminent usefulness, from these important labours of the mind and heart of this excellent author.

The further application of the principle of locality in reference to Sunday-schools, among ourselves, we think worthy of very serious consideration. To a considerable extent, in this department, we have acted upon it ; and in London there are some very striking proofs of its success in the effects produced upon the most abandoned neighbourhoods. We think that if, instead of bending so much effort to any one place, or section of a large town, by erecting a large school-house, and collecting in it several hundreds of children, the experiment were tried of multiplying schools on a smaller scale, in the worst neighbourhoods, and of endeavouring, by means of these institutions, to reach the case of the parents themselves, by the affectionate visitation of the teachers and conductors, a much greater degree of positive good would be the result. We earnestly recommend the consideration of this subject to our friends throughout the kingdom, with the attentive perusal of those parts of Dr. Chalmers's work, especially, which relate to it.\*

We should extend this review to much too great a length, were we to bring under the notice of our readers even a very small portion of the interesting topics with which this valuable volume abounds. There is, however, one of so much importance to the Christian church, though as a religious body we ourselves are familiar with it, that the sentiments of the author claim to be made public through every channel which is opened by the religious literature of the day.

It could not escape the observation of Dr. Chalmers, that in carrying on an "aggressive movement" of Christianity through the whole of the ignorance and vicious habit of a country,—the noble object at which he aims,—and in providing for an adequate number of Sabbath-schools an efficient conducting agency, the personal labours of those who are devoted to the work of the ministry, and the cure of souls. could not supply the requisite share of effort ; and that whilst, therefore, the work of superintendence and encouragement remained with them, a great number of "lay operatives" would be

\* See chap. ii., *passim* ; and chap. iv., pp. 150—153.



required. The indifference or opposition to such auxiliaries in established Churches, and especially in Protestant Establishments, is well known. The eighth chapter is, therefore, devoted to a most able and impressive defence of the practice of calling in to the aid of the Ministers of Christ, in various departments of usefulness, the labours of pious, though unlearned and humble, Christians ; and here the energy and eloquence of the writer, and the sobriety of his views, entitle him to equal praise.

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Dr. Chalmers has referred to Methodism with his usual liberality ; and we are reminded by this reference of the manner in which precisely the same views and principles, which are unfolded in the eighth chapter of this most valuable work, formerly operated in the hesitating mind of Mr. Wesley, and waged sharp, but happily successful, conflict with the habits of his order, and the prejudices of his education. In the dearth of clerical labourers, in so vast a field, he set open the door, under judicious control and superintendence, to lay-administration ; he encouraged the agency of the pious, in every direction, in spreading the light through their respective neighbourhoods ; and by this means, under the divine blessing, he increased his own usefulness a thousand fold, and, instead of operating individually, powerful as that individual operation was, he became the director of a vast system, which remained at work in his personal absence, and was continually pouring into the church of Christ its contributions of conquest from the world. Nor can we omit to remark how fully his conduct in this respect, so often the subject of ignorant or unthinking obloquy, is justified by the conviction which is at last forcing itself upon the minds of so many zealous Ministers, in both the Establishments of the empire, that the moral want of the nation is so wide and pressing, that it cannot be supplied, but by calling forward in aid of the ministry those very persons, of different ranks, whom that ministry has already brought under an effectual religious influence, to enlist themselves under its banners in an offensive warfare against the “darkness of this world.” And now, when so many

excellent persons of different denominations begin to feel for the spread of true religion, just as he, and a few others only, felt, in the opening of his career of apostolic labours, the same means of usefulness, substantially, though not in form, appear indispensable to yet more large and general success.

Nothing, indeed, has been so unfortunate for the Protestant part of Christendom, and for England in particular, as the prejudices which have prevented the adoption of that auxiliary and subordinate agency, by which the usefulness of the regular ministry might have been so much extended. How pitiable is the sight, which may be so often witnessed in our own country, of a faithful and zealous Minister of the Establishment, tracked with the eye of jealous distrust through all his walks of usefulness, lest he should carry the services of preaching and exhortation out of the precincts of his own church, and encourage a lay-administration even in the humblest departments of devotion and zeal! A body of Christians, the fruit of his labours, rise up around him; but the use he can make of them is extremely limited. Would he be authorized to suffer the oldest and most experienced of them to engage in extempore prayer in a meeting for that purpose, even when he himself should preside? Would he be authorized to encourage them, in any systematic manner, to visit the sick, and the families of the vicious, in his parish, however large it might be, as his auxiliaries, and there to pray, exhort, and read the Scriptures,—though the end of their efforts would be to increase the congregation at Church, and to root the Establishment in the deep affections of the poor? Such measures, alas! would not be generally approved; and thus is the usefulness of the best of our national Clergy greatly limited, as well as that of many sober and prudent persons who have been the fruits of their ministry.

We are no friends to the violation of any order in a church which can be founded upon the holy Scriptures, or upon fair inferences from them. Waving controversial points, we hold it to be quite clear, that it was the design and appointment of the Head of the church, that there should be men set apart,

in every age, from all worldly pursuits and cares, in order to be, in a special sense, the Ministers of the churches, and the Evangelists of the world. With Dr. Chalmers, we think that learning is necessary for Ministers, though not for all Ministers in the same degree; and that, both for the acquisition and application of this, and for the full execution of all the duties of the ministry, an entire devotedness to the office is absolutely requisite. Hence the ministry, properly so called, becomes a profession; and an order is created by divine appointment. With the men of that order, whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the method of admission into it, the doctrine of the Gospel is deposited as a trust, under special obligation to teach and to defend it. The rule of the church of Christ is also placed in their hands; not, indeed, as an unchecked and unadvised executive power, but still as an efficient and an official one. To them pertains, not only the preaching of the word, in its highest sense, but also the administration of the two sacraments; because they both suppose an authority to allow or to deny their administration, which authority can be lodged no where but in the Pastor, however different churches may guard or direct its exercise. But whilst we hold these principles to be sacred, because clearly scriptural, and feel them to be of incalculable importance, we still contend, that there is a wide field for the usefulness of many other pious persons, who are not called to this office, but remain in their respective worldly professions and pursuits. It is perfectly consistent with this, in our view, that where the number of true Ministers is inadequate, experienced Christians should read and explain God's holy word; and exhort their fellow-men to flee from the wrath to come. They cannot do this with the peculiar authority of Pastors; but they may do it, and by God's blessing are effectually doing it, as men judged qualified for this subordinate office by their Pastors, and by portions of the church of God. It is consistent with this, that one neighbour should instruct and warn another; that one experienced Christian should "teach the way of God more perfectly" to humble inquirers; that Christians should have their meetings for social prayer; and

that, in conducting educational or mere alms-giving charities, they should instruct, admonish, and pray with those who are placed under their care, or brought accidentally under their notice. All this ought to be done, and, if it is to be a permanent benefit, must be done in connexion with some branch of the church of Christ, and under the direction of its Ministers; for otherwise, the order which Christ himself has established is broken down; but, in subservience to that order, it ought to be encouraged, as the only means of making the church "the light of the world" in the full degree of its efficiency.

Dr. Chalmers admits the possibility of evils resulting from calling this subordinate agency into operation; and this must be granted. In the present state of human nature, it is impossible to excite any kind of active power, without incurring some danger. Miraculous gifts, in the primitive church, were by some, as at Corinth, exhibited for ostentation; and, probably, became fatal to some of those who were endued with them. The liberty of teaching, then enjoyed, led, in some instances, to schisms which were founded on no principle, and might be resolved into the mere vanity of the teacher, and impatience of discipline among his hearers. But the number and magnitude of the evils anticipated are often much magnified, and the remedy is nearer and more effectual than has been allowed. If, indeed, the regular ministry of any church should have become generally supine and worldly, and erring in doctrine,—while an active subordinate agency should arise, and spread itself by its energy,—and if the power, which ought to adopt, encourage, and direct whatever is good, should rather despise and persecute it, a virtual separation might ensue. But, even in such a case, supposing that the truth is really revived, taught, and practised by the subordinate agents, this occurrence, so far from being an evil, may be a good of no ordinary kind; though not so great a good as if the church, in which it first sprung up, had cordially adopted it. This has been, in some degree, the case with Methodism. It professed, for many years, a strict subordination to the national Church. Its agency was offered

to that Church for many years ; but it was rejected and persecuted. It has now gradually acquired, at least in many parts of this country, the form of a regular church ; but, certainly, with no injury even to the national Church itself, to which it yet bears a strong affection, and which it has powerfully excited to exertion.

Where, however, the regular Ministers of a church remain generally sound in doctrine, and fulfil the duties of their station, all disposition to separation, and to the multiplication of sects, grounding their separation on no sound and scriptural principle, or being too hasty to separate, even when that can be pleaded, is a great evil, as it may lead to indefinite divisions, may sink the character of the ministry, may encourage real fanaticism, and tend to destroy good discipline. The great remedy for all this, though to some extent it may happen after all, is furnished by Dr. Chalmers. He would not encourage either the superior or the subordinate agency exclusively. Either is an evil, if it be alone. If the regular ministry grasp every thing, the work will not be done, for their number is too small ; the “ out-field population,” to use Dr. Chalmers’s phrase, will not be reached. If, on the other hand, the subordinate agency only be impelled to activity, the order of Christ’s church is broken ; the proper offices of the Pastors of the churches are either invaded, or fall into disregard ; errors, irregularities, fanaticism, become triumphant ; and, by a reaction which always follows, paralysis succeeds to convulsive and morbid activity. Dr. Chalmers, therefore, wisely looks on both sides ; and were what he calls his *beau ideal* realized, none but vincible dangers could occur. He would still further encourage learning in the Clergy ; he would replenish their ranks with wise and zealous Evangelists, as the only men whose “ preaching and living ” can give them influence ; (and they are the only Clergy who in fact obtain it ; ) but he would call every Christian, who can be useful to others, into some department of exertion.

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We have dwelt the more largely upon this topic, both because of its general interest, and because of its application

to our own body. We may see in the principles so ably advocated by Dr. Chalmers, not only a justification of our system,—that might merely gratify us,—but a high road of duty most clearly laid down. We have a large subordinate agency at work in every part of the kingdom, and, in most cases, with the greatest benefit to the cause of true religion ; but its lasting benefit and efficiency consist in its connexion with the order, discipline, and direction of a Christian church. These powers are vested in its Ministers. They must rise with this auxiliary agency, and work with it. To them belong the careful cultivation of ministerial talent and ministerial zeal and devotion,—learning, at least in a few,—sound biblical knowledge, and powerful and instructive preaching in all,—and an ever active and wakeful zeal, prompting every subordinate agency, and, by the legitimate influence resulting from office, gifts, and graces, at once maintaining it in activity, and giving to it its right and safe direction.

Our limits will only allow us another topic, and that is the very gratifying one, to which we before have briefly alluded, of Dr. Chalmers's liberality. As a zealous Minister of an established Church, he is the advocate of an Establishment ; and as he holds such an institution,—an Establishment with full toleration,—we perfectly agree with him. Speaking of the importance of external mechanism for the transmission of Christianity, he observes,—

“ We hold the very same principles to be applicable to the question of religious Establishments. It is true, that our present goodly apparatus of churches and parishes was reared and perfected in days of thickest darkness. But when the light of reformation arose, it broke its way with greater force and facility, because of the very passages which Popery had opened ; and let our ecclesiastical malcontents ascribe what corruption they may to the Establishments of England and Scotland, we hold them to be the destined instruments both for propagating and for augmenting the Christianity of our land, and should never cease to regret the overthrow of this mighty apparatus, as a catastrophe of deadliest import to the religious character of our nation. The doctrine of a celestial

influence does not supersede, but rather calls for, a terrestria. mechanism, to guide and to extend the distribution of it ; and it is under the want of the latter, that a mass of Heathenism has deepened, and accumulated, and attained to such a magnitude and density in our large towns. The healing water is a treasure which must be looked for and prayed for from heaven ; but still, it is put into earthen vessels, and is conveyed through the whole body of corruption by earthen pathways." (Pages 23—24.)

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Protracted as has been our review of this volume, we do not feel that any apology is due to our readers for that circumstance ; because we are sure that the high importance of its various subjects, and the peculiarly able and practical manner in which the author has discussed them, would have amply justified details yet more copious, and observations more extended. We conclude by recommending to all Christian philanthropists, with whom our judgment may have influence, the immediate purchase and careful study of this most interesting, argumentative, and eloquent work.

## REVIEW XI.

*An Inquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination, in four Discourses, preached before the University of Oxford, &c. By Edward Copleston, D.D., Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, &c.* 8vo. pp. 219.

*Vindiciæ Analogicæ: A Letter to the Rev. Edward Copleston, on his "Inquiry," &c. By the Rev. E. W. Grinfield, M.A., Minister of Laura Chapel, Bath.* 8vo. pp. 68.

*Remarks upon the Objections made to certain Passages in the "Inquiry," &c. By Edward Copleston, D.D., &c., &c.* 8vo. pp. 62.

*A Defence of some Passages in Dr. Copleston's "Inquiry," &c. By the Rev. W. Dalby, M.A.* 8vo. pp. 80.

*Vindiciæ Analogicæ, Part II. Being a Reply to the Third Section of the Rev. Dr. Copleston's "Remarks," &c.* 8vo. pp. 166.

To complete the controversy contained in the works whose titles are above inserted, some other pamphlets ought to have been added, and also a new edition of Archbishop King's Sermon on Predestination, with Notes by Whately. The publications now announced contain a sufficiently full exhibition of the arguments on that part of the question into which only we design to enter at much length. We advert to it as a point of general theology, having no interest in what is merely personal among the writers, or in the relation of the theological views asserted and denied to those parties in the Church, to which the respective controvertists may belong. One general remark shall suffice on the last topic. We are glad to see questions in divinity entered into with so much ardour in the Establishment. It is a gratifying mark of a healthful state of feeling, in any religious body, to be awake to the importance of right opinions on leading points of doctrine; and so long as this sentiment remains in the Church, her eminence, as the parent of great theological writers, is not likely to decline. The literary advantages and leisure of so many of her Clergy, kept in connexion with this spirit, will



secure a succession of those writings which have rendered the Church of England the light and glory of Protestant Christendom.

The works above enumerated are not, indeed, to be ranked with the theological classics of former or present times ; nor is it likely that they will ever attain that eminence ; but they discuss several important topics ; and from the pens of such men as their authors, the points at issue could not fail to be acutely and ably argued. The temper of the principal antagonist of Dr. Copleston is, however, somewhat the worse for exercise ; though we decidedly think that the strength of the argument lies on his side.

The occasion of this controversy was the sanction given by the authority of Dr. Copleston, in the work placed at the head of this article, to the sentiments of Archbishop King, contained in his well-known sermon on divine predestination and foreknowledge ; the argument of which forms the basis of one of Dr. Copleston's discourses, and whose scheme of interpreting the scriptural revelation of the nature and attributes of God, he unfolds and defends against objections in a long note. The sermon itself is strongly recommended to students in divinity ; and on the strength of this recommendation, Mr. Whately's new edition of it with notes has been given to the world.

The great theological authorities of the Church are, unquestionably, against Archbishop King's scheme ; and it was replied to by some of her most influential Divines, upon its first publication, as leading, though undesignedly, to the most dangerous consequences. Mr. Grinfield is of the same opinion ; and, supported by such authority, he has vigorously assaulted this revived and erroneous theory itself, and the novel notions on the subject of analogy, by which it is rather coloured than defended by Dr. Copleston. Pressed so vigorously, Dr. Copleston has certainly made some important concessions. He has greatly qualified his first almost unqualified commendations of the Archbishop's sermon ; and on the subject itself has yielded what we think is tantamount to a full surrender of the most important part of the question,

in favour of his acute, though too sarcastic and irritable, antagonist.

The controversy between Mr. Grinfield and Dr. Copleston is not, as our readers will thus perceive, on the subject of necessity and predestination, which is so well discussed in Dr. Copleston's Inquiry. Here they are agreed ; and Mr. Grinfield has paid his opponent the just praise of having treated these subjects, in the main, with great ability and conclusiveness of reasoning. The principal question is, whether Archbishop King's principle be a sound one,—that we have no direct or proper notion of the divine attributes, and cannot, therefore, argue from them on the points at issue in the Calvinistic controversy. The theory was invented, it would seem, by the good Archbishop, with the praiseworthy design of casting oil on the waters of this controversy, and of rendering men less confident in their reasoning on these high mysteries. But it has happened that neither side was satisfied, and that the notions of the excellent Prelate have been as warmly attacked by Arminians as by Calvinists. The bearing of the scheme was intentionally anti-Calvinistic ; and for that reason, probably, among others, it recommended itself to the favourable regards of Dr. Copleston. But we fully agree in opinion with Mr. Grinfield, that it is quite as favourable to Calvinism as to the opposite doctrine ; and that what the Calvinist might lose by being non-plussed in his favourite argument from the divine foreknowledge, he would gain by transferring the theory to the moral attributes of God, and non-plussing thereby, as effectually, every argument against unconditional reprobation, which our ordinary notions of these moral attributes supply. The truth is, that the train of the Archbishop's thoughts were suffered to run so far in the enticing track of a new discovery, that, like too many other controvertists, provided he pushed the adverse opinions far enough back, he minded not what friendly truths he wounded or overturned in his career. He was honestly intent upon dealing out his blows before him ; but he was inattentive to their side-sweep. This is one of the common evils of controversy, against which too much caution cannot be used ; and,

decidedly as we are opposed to the peculiarities of the system usually called Calvinistic, we know of no controversy, which has been, too generally, managed with so little care, and no source of theological error so fruitful, as the undistinguishing and heady violence with which it has been assailed. To get rid of the unsound parts of this form of doctrine, the principles which it has in common with genuine Christianity have often been given up; and to oppose extreme views of God's sovereignty and government, contrary ones have been so broadly and unguardedly assumed, that some third party, equally inimical to both, has found his most effectual weapons in those admissions and assertions which haste, or pertinacious attachment to some favourite system, has drawn forth. The misinterpretations of Scripture by believers have often furnished the opposers of revelation with a means of annoyance which they would not have discovered by their own sagacity; or for which they could not have pleaded the same authority. The insidious use made by Lord Bolingbroke of the principle of Archbishop King, as quoted in the Appendix to the second part of *Vindiciæ Analogicæ*, is an instance of this, among many equally to be regretted.

The substance of the theory of Archbishop King will appear from the following passages of his sermon; and we prefer quoting the original to extracting the abridgment of it given in Dr. Copleston's note:—

“ It is, in effect, agreed on all hands that the nature of God is incomprehensible by human understanding; and not only his nature, but, likewise, his powers and faculties, and the ways and methods in which he exercises them, are so far beyond our reach, that we are utterly incapable of framing exact and adequate notions of them. This the Scriptures frequently teach us, particularly St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans: ‘ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!’ (Rom. xi. 33.)

“ We ought to remember, that the descriptions which we frame to ourselves of God, or of the divine attributes, are not taken from any direct or immediate perceptions that we have

of him or them ; but from some observations we have made of his works, and from the consideration of those qualifications that we conceive would enable us to perform the like. Thus, observing great order in all the parts of the world, and perceiving that every thing is adapted to the preservation and advantage of the whole, we consider, that we could not contrive and settle things in so excellent a manner without great wisdom ; and thence conclude that God, who has thus concerted and settled matters, must have wisdom. And having, then, ascribed to him wisdom, because we see the effects of it in his works, we conclude, that he has, likewise, foresight and understanding ; because we cannot conceive wisdom without these, and because if we were to do what we see he has done, we could not perform it without the exercise of these faculties.

“ It doth truly follow from hence, that God must either have these, or other faculties equivalent to them, and adequate to these mighty effects which proceed from them. And because we do not know what his faculties are in themselves, we give them the names of those powers that we find would be necessary to us in order to produce such effects, and call them wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge ; yet, at the same time, we cannot but be sensible, that they are of a nature altogether different from ours, and that we have no direct and proper notion or conception of them. Only we are sure, that they have effects like unto those that proceed from wisdom, understanding, and foreknowledge in us ; and that when our works fail to resemble them in any particular, it is by reason of some defect in these qualifications.

“ Thus our reason teaches us to ascribe these attributes to God, by way of analogy to such qualities as we find most valuable in ourselves.

“ If we look into the holy Scriptures, and consider the representations given us there of God or his attributes, we shall find them plainly borrowed from some resemblance to things with which we are acquainted by our senses. Thus when the holy Scriptures speak of God, they ascribe hands, and eyes, and feet to him ; not that we should believe he has any of these members, according to the literal signification ;

but the meaning is, that he has a power to execute all those acts, to the effecting of which these parts in us are instrumental ; that is, he can converse with men as well as if he had a tongue and mouth ; he can discern all that we do or say as perfectly as if he had eyes and ears ; he can reach us as well as if he had hands and feet ; he has as true and substantial a being as if he had a body ; and he is as truly present every where as if that body were infinitely extended. And in truth, if all these things, which are thus ascribed to him, did literally belong to him, he could not do what he does near so effectually as he doeth them by the faculties which he really possesses, though what they are in themselves be unknown to us.

“ After the same manner, we find him represented as affected with such passions as we perceive to be in ourselves, namely, as angry and pleased, as loving and hating, as repenting and changing his resolutions, as full of mercy and provoked to revenge. And yet, on reflection, we cannot think, that any of these passions literally affect the divine nature. But the meaning is, he will as certainly punish the wicked, as if he were inflamed with the passion of anger against them ; he will as infallibly reward the good, as we will those for whom we have a particular affection ; when men turn from their wickedness, and do what is agreeable to the divine commands, he will as surely change his dispensations towards them, as if he really repented and changed his mind.

“ And as the passions of men are thus, by analogy, ascribed to God, because these would in us be the principles of such outward actions, as we see he has performed ; so, by the same condescension to the weakness of our capacities, we find the powers and operations of our minds ascribed to him.

“ The use of foreknowledge with us is to prevent any surprise when events happen, and that we may not be at a loss what to do by things coming upon us unawares. Now inasmuch as we are certain that nothing can surprise God, and that he can never be at a loss what to do ; we conclude that God has a faculty to which our foreknowledge bears some analogy, therefore we call it by that name.

“ But it does not follow from hence, that any of these are

literally in God, after the manner they are in us, any more than hands or eyes, than love or hatred are ; on the contrary, we must acknowledge that those things which we call by these names, when attributed to God, are of so very different a nature from what they are in us, and so superior to all that we can conceive, that in reality there is no more likeness between them, than between our hand and God's power. Nor can we draw consequences from the real nature of one to that of the other, with more justness of reason, than we can conclude, because our hand consists of fingers and joints, therefore the power of God is distinguished by such parts.

“ So that to argue, ‘ Because foreknowledge, as it is in us, if supposed infallible, cannot consist with the contingency of events, therefore, what we call so in God cannot,’ is as far from reason, as it would be to conclude, because our eyes cannot see in the dark, therefore, when God is said to see all things, his eyes must be enlightened with a perpetual sunshine ; or, because we cannot love or hate without passion, therefore, when the Scriptures ascribe these to God, they teach us, that he is liable to these affections as we are.

“ We ought, therefore, to interpret all these things, when attributed to God, only by way of condescension to our capacities, in order to help us to conceive what we are to expect from him, and what duty we are to pay him. Particularly, the terms of foreknowledge, predestination, nay, of understanding and will, when ascribed to him, are not to be taken strictly or properly, nor are we to think that they are in him in the same sense that we find them in ourselves ; on the contrary, we are to interpret them only by way of analogy and comparison.

“ Thus, when we ascribe foreknowledge to him, we mean, that he can no more be surprised with any thing that happens, than a wise man, that foresees an event, can be surprised when it comes to pass ; nor can he any more be at a loss what he is to do in such a case, than a wise man can, who is most perfectly acquainted with all accidents which may obstruct his design, and has provided against them.” (Pages 6—9.)

Such a theory is surely placed beyond the bounds of palliative explanations, and reasonable apology. It wrests the argument, it is true, out of the hands of the Calvinist, when he would connect God's prescience of events with necessity. But few Arminians will consent to buy off the attack which may be made on that ground, at the price of surrendering the principle that we have a direct and proper revelation of God in his own word, though, as our minds are finite, our capacity for knowing an infinite Being must, in many respects, be inadequate; whilst, on the other hand, the most candid Calvinist, one who wishes to think and speak most reverently and humbly of God, and to confine the dispute within the range of Scripture verity, would naturally urge, that whilst, on the ground that he can have no direct and proper notion of the attributes of God, he is required to surrender all positive and explicit ideas of those attributes, (a principle of great consequence in other questions of doctrine and morals,) he gains nothing in return, and no middle ground is pointed out to him and to those with whom he differs, on which they may more successfully compose their dispute. For though foreknowledge in God should be admitted to be something of a "very different nature" from the same quality in man; yet, as it is represented as something equivalent to foreknowledge, whatever that something may be,—as, in consequence of it, prophecies have actually been uttered and fulfilled, and of a kind, too, which relate to actions for which men have, in fact, been held accountable,—all the original difficulty of reconciling contingent events to this something, of which human foreknowledge is a "kind of shadow," as "a map of China is to China itself," remains in full force. The difficulty is shifted, but not removed; it cannot even be with more facility slid past; and either the Christian world must be content to forego all inquiries into these subjects,—a consummation not to be expected, however it may be wished,—or the contest must be resumed on another field, with no advantage from better ground or from broader daylight. No practical end is gained by this, or by any other novel theory on the prescience of God, which we have seen; and therefore, whatever

unsound principles they have involved have been gratuitously adopted.

But to the opinions of Archbishop King. The views which are contained in the foregoing extract are certainly carried to a dangerous extreme. For if it be true, that the faculties we ascribe to God are "of a nature altogether different from our own, and that we have no direct and proper notion or conception of them," then, in point of fact, we have no direct revelation at all of the nature of God, and of his attributes, in the Scriptures; and what we esteem to be such, is a revelation of terms to which we can attach no "proper notion." If this conclusion be well founded, then it is so monstrous, that the premises on which it hangs must be unsound and anti-scriptural. This alone is a sufficient general refutation of the hypothesis; but a more particular examination will show that it rests upon false assumptions; and that it introduces gratuitous difficulties, not called for by the supposed difficulty of reconciling the foreknowledge of God with the freedom of human actions.

1. It is assumed that the descriptions which we frame to ourselves of God, are taken from the observations we have made on his works, and from the consciousness of those qualifications which, we conceive, would enable us to perform the like. This might be, in part, true of Heathens left without the light of revelation; but it is not true of those who enjoy that advantage. Our knowledge of God comes from the Scriptures, which are taught us in our infancy, and with which, either by reading or hearing, we become familiar as we grow up. The notions we have of God, so far as they agree with the Scriptures, are, therefore, not those which we have framed by the process assumed by the Archbishop, but those which have been declared to us in the Scriptures by God himself, as descriptions of his own nature. This makes a great difference. Our own modes of forming conceptions of the divine nature would have no authority higher than ourselves; the announcements of Scripture are the word of God, communicating by human language the truth and reality of things, as to himself. This is the constant profession of the sacred writers;



they tell us, not what there is in man which may support an analogy between man and God, but what God is in himself.

2. It is assumed, that because the nature of God is "incomprehensible," we have no "proper notion or conception of it." The term "proper notion" is vague. It may mean "an exact and adequate notion," which it may be granted without hesitation that we have not; or it may mean a notion correct and true in itself, though not complete and comprehensive. A great part of the fallacy lies here. To be incomprehensible, is not, in every case, and assuredly not in this, to be unintelligible. We may know God, though we cannot fully know him; and our notions may be true, though not adequate; and they must be true, if we have rightly understood God's revelation of himself. Of being, for instance, we can form a true notion, because we are conscious of our own existence; and though we cannot extend the conception to absolute being, or self-existence, because our being is a dependent one, we can yet supply the defect, as we are taught by the Scriptures, by the negative notion of independence. Of spirit we have a true notion, and understand, therefore, what is meant, when it is said, that "God is a Spirit;" and though we can have but an imperfect conception of an infinite Spirit, we can supply that want also, to all practical purposes, by the negative process of removing all imperfection, or limit of excellence, from our views of the divine nature. We have a true notion of the presence of one being with other beings, and with place; and though we cannot comprehend the mode in which God is omnipresent, we are able to conceive, without difficulty, the fact, that the divine presence fills all things. We have true notions of power and knowledge, and can suppose them infinite; though how they should be so, we know not. And as to the moral attributes, such as truth, justice, and goodness, we have not only true, but comprehensive, and, for any thing that appears to the contrary, adequate notions of them; for our difficulties, as to these attributes, do not arise from any incapacity to conceive of what is perfect truth, perfect justice, and perfect goodness, but from our inability to

show how many things, which occur in the divine government, are to be reconciled to these attributes ; and that, not because our notions of the attributes themselves are obscure, but because the things, out of which such questions arise, are either in themselves, or in their relations, but partially understood or greatly mistaken. Job and his friends did not differ in abstract views of the justice of the moral government of God, but in reconciling Job's afflictions with it.

3. It is assumed, that the nature of God is essentially different from the spiritual nature of man. This is not the doctrine of Scripture. When it says, that "God is a Spirit," we have no reason to conclude, that a distant analogy, such a one as springs out of mere relation, which, in a poetic imagination, might be sufficient to support a figure of speech, is alone intended. The very argument connected with these words, in the discourse of our Lord with the woman of Samaria, forbids this. It is a declaration of the nature of God, and of the worship suited to his nature ; and the word employed is that by which both Jews and Samaritans had been taught by the same inspired records, which they each possessed, to designate and conceive of the intellectual nature of man. The nature of God and the nature of man are not the same ; but they are similar, because they bear many attributes in common, though, on the part of the divine nature, in a degree of perfection infinitely exceeding. The difference of degree, however, cannot prove a difference of essence,—no, nor the circumstance that one has attributes which the other has not,—in any sense of the word difference which could be of service to the advocates of this hypothesis. But if a total difference is proved as to the intellectual attributes of God and men, that difference must be extended to the moral attributes also ; and so the very foundation of morals and religion would be undermined. This point was successfully pressed by Edwards against Archbishop King ; and it is met very feebly by Dr. Copleston. "Edwards," he observes, "raises a clamour about the moral attributes, as if their nature also must be held to be different in kind from human virtues, if the knowledge of God be admitted to be different in kind from ours." Cer-

tainly this follows from the principles laid down by Archbishop King ; and if his followers take his conclusions as to the intellectual attributes, they must take them as to the moral attributes also. If the faculties of God be “ of a nature altogether different from ours,” we have no more reason to except from this rule the truth and the justice, than the wisdom and the prescience, of God ; and the reasoning of Archbishop King is as conclusive in the one case as the other.

The fallacy of the above assumptions is sufficient to destroy the hypothesis which has been built upon them ; and the argument from Scripture may be shown to be as unfounded. It is, as the above extract will show, in brief this, that as the Scriptures ascribe, by analogy, hands, and eyes, and feet to God, and also the passions of love, hatred, anger, &c., “ because these would be in us the principles of such outward actions as we see he has performed ; so, by the same condescension to the weakness of our capacities, we find the powers and operations of our minds ascribed to him.” But will the advocates of this opinion look steadily to its legitimate consequences ? We believe not ; and those consequences must, therefore, be its total refutation. For if both our intellectual and moral affections are made use of but as distant analogies, and obscure intimations, to convey to us an imperfect knowledge of the intellectual powers and affections of the divine nature, in the same manner as human hands, and human eyes, are made to represent his power and his knowledge,—it follows, that there is nothing in the divine nature which answers more truly and exactly to knowledge, justice, truth, mercy, and other qualities in man, than the knowledge of God answers to human organs of vision, or his power to the hands or the feet ; and from this it would follow, that nothing is said in the Scriptures of the divine Being, but what is, in the highest sense, figurative, and purely metaphorical. We are no more like God in our minds than in our bodies ; and it might as truly have been said with respect to man’s bodily shape, as to his mental faculties, that man was made “ in the image of God.”

It is also to be observed, that when the Scriptures speak of the knowledge, power, and other attributes of God, in

figurative language, taken from the eyes or hands of the body, it is sufficiently obvious that this language is metaphorical, not only from the reason of things itself, but because the same ideas are also quite as often expressed without figure ; and the metaphor therefore never misleads us. We have sufficient proof also that it never did mislead the Jews, even in the worst periods of their history, and when their tendency to idolatry and gross superstition was most powerful. They made images in human shape of other gods, but never of Jehovah ; the Jews were never Anthropomorphites, whatever they might be beside. But it is equally certain, that they did give a literal interpretation to those passages in their Scriptures which speak of the knowledge, justice, mercy, &c., of God, as the same in kind, though infinitely higher in their degree of excellence, with the same qualities in men. The reason is obvious. They could not interpret those passages of their holy writings which speak of the hands, the eyes, and the feet of God literally ; because every part of the same sacred revelation was full of representations of the divine nature, which declared his absolute spirituality ; and they could not interpret those passages figuratively which speak of the intellectual and moral qualities of God in terms which express the same qualities in men ; because their whole revelation did not furnish them with any hint, even the most distant, that there was a more literal or exact sense in which they could be taken. It was not possible for any man to take literally that sublimely figurative representation of the upholding and ruling power of God, where he is said to “hold the waters of the ocean in the hollow of his hand,” unless he could also conclude, that where he is said to “weigh the hills in scales, and the mountains in a balance,” he was to understand this literally also. The idea suggested is that of sustaining, and regulating, and adjusting power ; but if he were told that he ought to take the idea of power in as figurative a sense as that of the waters being held in the hollow of the hand of God, and his weighing the mountains in scales, he would find it impossible to form any idea of the thing signified at all. The first step in the attempt would plunge him into total darkness.

The figurative hand assists him to form the idea of managing and controlling power, but the figurative power suggests nothing; and so this scheme blots out entirely all revelation of God of any kind, by resolving the whole into figures, which represent nothing of which we can form any conception.

The argument of Archbishop King, from the passions which are ascribed to God in Scripture, is not more conclusive than that of which we have already disposed. "After the same manner," he says, "we find him represented as affected with such passions as we perceive to be in ourselves, as angry and pleased, as loving and hating, as repenting and changing his resolutions, as full of mercy and provoked to revenge; and yet, on reflection, we cannot think that any of these passions literally affect the divine nature." But why not? As they are represented in Scripture to be affections of the divine nature, and not in the gross manner in which they are expressed in this extract, there seems nothing improper in taking them literally; and no necessity is made out to compel us to understand them to signify somewhat for which we have not a name, and of which we can form no idea. The Scriptures nowhere warrant us to consider God as a cold metaphysical abstraction; and they nowhere indicate to us that when they ascribe affections to him, they are to be taken as mere figures of speech. On the contrary, they teach us to consider them as answering substantially, though not circumstantially, to the innocent affections of men and angels. Why may not anger be literally ascribed to God, not, indeed, as it may be caricatured to suit a theory, but as we find it ascribed in the Scriptures? It is not malignant anger, nor blind, stormy, and disturbing anger, which is spoken of; nor is this always, nor need it be at any time, the anger of creatures. There is an anger which is without sin in man; "a perception of evil, and opposition to it, and also an emotion of mind, a sensation, or passion, suitable thereto."\* There was this in our Lord, who was without sin; nor is it represented by the Evangelists who give us the instances, as even an infirmity of the nature he

\* Wesley.

assumed. In God, it may be allowed to exist in a different manner from that in which it is found even in men who are “angry and sin not;” it is accompanied with no weakness, it is allied to no imperfection; but that it does exist as truly in him as in man, is the doctrine of Scripture, and there is no perfection ascribed to God, to which it can be proved contrary, or with which we cannot conceive it to co-exist. Not only anger, we are told, is ascribed to God, but the being pleased. Let the term used be complacency, instead of one which seems to have been selected to convey a notion of a lower and less worthy kind; and there is no incongruity in the idea. He is the blessed or happy God, and, therefore, capable of pleasure. He looked upon his works, and saw that they were “good,” “very good,”—words which suggest the idea of his complacency upon their completion; and this, when separated from all connexion with human infirmity, appears to be a perfection, and not a defect. To be incapable of complacency and delight, is the character of the supreme Being of Epicurus and of the modern Hindoos, of whose internal state, so to speak, deep sleep, and the surface of an unruffled lake, are favourite figurative representations. But of this refinement we have nothing in the Bible, nor is it in the least necessary to our idea of infinite perfection. And why should not love exist in God, in more than a figurative sense? For this affection to be accompanied with perturbation, anxiety, and weak or irrational partiality, is a mere accident. So we often see it in human beings; but though this affection, without any concurrent infirmity, be ascribed to God, it surely does not follow that it exists in him, as something in nature wholly different from love in wise and holy creatures, in angels and in saints. Not only the beauty, the force, and the encouragement of a thousand passages of Scripture would be lost upon this hypothesis, but their meaning also. Love in God is something, we are told, which is so called, because it produces similar effects to those which are produced by love in man; but what this something is, we are not informed; and the revelation of Scripture, as to God, is thus reduced to a revelation of his acts only, but not, in the least, of the prin-

ciples from which they flow. The same observations may be applied to mercy and revenge, by the latter of which the Archbishop can mean nothing more than judicial vengeance, or retribution, though an equivocal term has been adopted *ad captandum*. "Repenting and changing his resolutions," are improperly placed among the affections; but, freed from ideas of human infirmity, they may be, without the least dishonour to the fulness of the divine perfections, ascribed to God in as literal a sense as we find them stated in the Scriptures. They there clearly signify no more than the change which takes place in the affections of God, his love or his anger, as men turn from the practice of righteousness, or repent and turn back again to him; and the consequent changes in his dispensations towards them as their Governor and Lord. This is the scriptural doctrine; and there is nothing in it which is not most worthy of God, though literally interpreted,—nothing which is not consistent with his absolute immutability. He is unchangeably the lover and the rewarder of righteousness, unchangeably the hater and the judge of iniquity; and as his creatures are righteous or wicked, or are changed from the one state to the other, they become the objects of the different regards, and of the different administrations, of the same righteous and gracious Sovereign, who, by these very changes, shows that he is without variableness, or shadow of turning.

If, then, there is no reason for not attributing even certain affections of the human mind to God, when connected with absolute perfection and excellence, in their nature and in their exercise, no reason, certainly, can be given for not considering his intellectual attributes, represented, as to their nature though not as to their degree, by terms taken from the faculties of the human mind, as corresponding with our own. But the matter is placed beyond all doubt by the appeal which is so often made in the Bible to these properties in man, not as illustrations only of something distantly and indistinctly analogous to properties in the divine nature, but as representations of the nature and reality of these qualities in the supreme Being, and which are, therefore, made the grounds of argument, the basis of duty, and the sources of consolation.

With respect to the nature of God, it is sufficient to refer to the passage before mentioned, "God is a Spirit;" where the argument is, that he requires not a ceremonial but a spiritual worship, the worship of man's spirit; because he himself is a Spirit. How this argument could be brought out on Archbishop King's and Dr. Copleston's theory, it is difficult to state. It would be something of this kind: "God is a Spirit;" that is, he is called a Spirit, because his nature is analogous to the spiritual nature of man: But this analogy implies no similarity of nature; it is a mere analogy of relation; and, therefore, though we have no direct and proper notion of the nature of God, yet, because he is called a Spirit, "they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." This is, indeed, far from being an intelligible, and it is still less a practical, argument.

With respect to his intellectual attributes, it is argued in Scripture, "He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" Here the knowledge of God is supposed to be of the same nature as the knowledge of man. This is the sole foundation of the argument, which would have appeared indescribably obscure if, according to Archbishop King's hypothesis, it had stood thus: "He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not have somewhat in his nature, which, because it gives rise to actions similar to those which proceed from knowledge, we may call knowledge, but of which we have no direct or proper notion?"

With respect to his moral attributes, we find the same appeals: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Here the abstract term "right" is undoubtedly used in the sense commonly received among men, and is supposed to be comprehensible by them. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." The righteousness in man which he loveth, is, clearly, correspondent in its kind to that which constitutes him eminently "the righteous Lord." Still more forcibly, the house of Israel is called upon to judge between him and his vineyard; he condescends to try his own justice by the notions of justice which prevail among men; in which there could be no meaning, if this moral quality were not in God



and in man of the same kind. "Hear now, O house of Israel, are not my ways equal?" But what force would there be in this challenge, designed to silence the murmurs of a people under correction, as though they had not been justly dealt with, if justice among men had no more resemblance to justice in God than a hand to power, or an eye to knowledge, or "a map of China to China itself?" The appeal is to a standard common to both, and by which one might be as explicitly determined as the other. Finally, the ground of all praise and adoration of God for works of mercy and judgment, of all trust in God on account of his faithfulness and truth, and of all imitation of God in his mercy and compassion, is laid in every part of the word of God, not surely in this, that there are unknown and unapprehended qualities of some kind in God, which lead him to perform actions similar to those which flow from justice, truth, and mercy, in men; but in the consideration that he is justice itself, truth itself, and goodness itself. The hypothesis is, therefore, contradicted by the Scripture; and though it has been assumed in favour of a great truth,—that the prescience of God does not destroy the liberty of man,—that truth needs not so cumbrous and mischievous an auxiliary. Divine foreknowledge and the freedom of human agency are compatible; not because foreknowledge in God is a figure of speech, or something different in kind from foreknowledge in man; but because knowledge, simply considered, whether present, past, or future, can have no influence upon action at all, and cannot, therefore, change a contingent action into a necessary one.

Dr. Copleston, in his *Inquiry*, has made this point so clear, and argued against the doctrine of necessity so forcibly, that less than most writers we have met with on this subject, did he require any foreign aid, to render his work more convincing. He did not certainly need the bolstering of the scheme of Archbishop King; which is a worse than useless appendage to his book, and will unhappily counteract its otherwise useful tendency and effect.

For, after all, where does the great theological difficulty lie, for the evasion of which so much is to be sacrificed?

The prescience, counsels, and plans of God, are prescience, counsels, and plans, which respect free agents, as far as men are concerned; and unless we superadd influence to necessitate, or plans to entice irresistibly, and to entrap inevitably, into some given course of conduct, there is clearly no incongruity between these and human freedom. There is a difficulty in conceiving how foreknowledge should be absolute, as there is a difficulty in conceiving how God's present knowledge should penetrate the heart of man, and know his present thoughts; but neither party argues from the incomprehensibility of the mode to the impossibility of the thing. The great difficulty does not then lie here. It seems to be planted precisely in this, that God should prohibit many things, which he nevertheless knows will occur, and in the prescience of which he regulates his dispensations to bring out of these circumstances various results which he makes subservient to the displays of his mercy and his justice; and particularly, that in the case of those individuals who, he knows, will finally perish, he exhorts, warns, invites, and, in a word, takes active and influential means to prevent a foreseen result. This forms the difficulty; because, in the case of man, the prescience of failure would, in many cases, paralyse all effort; whereas, in the government of God, men are treated, in our views, with as much intensity of care and effort, as though the issue of things was entirely unknown. But if the perplexity arises from this, nothing can be more clear than that the question is not how to reconcile God's prescience with the freedom of man, but how to reconcile the conduct of God towards man, considered as a free-agent, with his own prescience; how to assign a congruity to warnings, exhortations, and other means adopted to prevent destruction as to individuals, with the certain foresight of that terrible result. In this, however, no moral attribute of God is impugned. On the contrary, mercy requires the application of means of deliverance, if man be under a dispensation of grace; and justice requires it, if man is to be judged for the use or abuse of mercy. The difficulty, then, entirely resolves itself into a mere matter of feeling, which, of course,—as we cannot be judges of a nature infinite

in perfection, though similar to what is excellent in our own, nor of proceedings which, in the unlimited range of the government of God, may have connexions and bearings beyond all our comprehension,—we cannot reduce to a human standard. Is it then to adjust a mere matter of feeling, that we are to make these outrageous interpretations of the word of God, in what he hath spoken of himself; and are we to deny that we have any “proper or direct notion of God,” because we cannot find him out to perfection? This difficulty, which we ought not to dare to try by human standards, is not one, however, we again remark, which arises at all out of the relation of the divine prescience to the liberty of human actions; and it is entirely untouched by any part of this controversy. We fall into new difficulties through these speculations, but do not escape the true one. If the freedom of man is denied, the moral attributes of God are impugned; and the difficulty, as a matter of feeling, is heightened. Divine prescience cannot be denied, because the prophetic Scriptures have determined that already; and if Archbishop King’s interpretation of foreknowledge be resorted to, the something substituted for prescience, and equivalent to it, comes in, to bring us back, in a fallacious circle, to the point from which we started.

We mentioned, however, that Dr. Copleston’s Remarks on the Objections made to the Inquiry contained some important concessions, which we are happy to notice. He had certainly, in his first publication, recommended Archbishop King’s sermon in nearly unqualified terms; and made himself as responsible for the whole theory which it contains, as he was understood to be by his acute antagonist Mr. Grinfield. Pushed in the argument, he has somewhat reluctantly made exceptions and explanations, which fully amount to a renunciation of the most obnoxious part of the principles asserted in the sermon he had so strongly recommended. He admits that the Archbishop has unwarily, and unnecessarily to his own argument, used the phrase “a different nature,” when speaking of the divine attributes; to which Mr. Grinfield justly replies, “That he has done so ‘unwarily’ I most readily acknowledge, but that it was ‘unnecessary to his argument’ I can by no means

admit. It appears to me, that in giving up this position you virtually resign the cause into my hands. If these attributes be of the same nature, I can have no further dispute with you on the subject." Dr. Copleston also thinks himself unfairly charged with "denying all similarity between the divine attributes and human virtues," since he had said in his Inquiry, "Of this we may be sure, that whatever is really excellent in ourselves, exists in an infinite degree of excellence in God." This was so logically contrary to the scope of the argument in the Inquiry, that Mr. Grinfield regarded it "as a sacrifice of logic to better feelings," and notices it with satisfaction. What was, however, only incidental in the Inquiry, we are glad to see ratified as Dr. Copleston's deliberate opinion in the Remarks; though at the expense of giving up, in substance, the whole speculation of Archbishop King; and thus the controversy, as to its main question, has issued in the confirmation of the truth.

A large share of the replies and rejoinders in this discussion is occupied with the logical question of "analogy;" which, though very acutely managed, and in itself exceedingly interesting, we take to lie quite out of the way of the theological view of the subject, with which alone we feel concerned. Archbishop King clearly confounds analogy and metaphor. Dr. Copleston lays it down, that analogy implies no similarity in the subjects which are compared; that it signifies merely a sameness in their relations, but includes no likeness originally subsisting in the subjects themselves. This view is also defended by Mr. Dalby. Mr. Grinfield, we think, has argued this point with ability, and has endeavoured to establish the conclusion, that "whereas in mathematics all magnitudes, except a point, may become analogical to each other, because they all admit of being multiplied and divided, &c., as it is their quantity alone which is considered; so, on the other hand, in moral subjects, it is those things alone which can be looked upon as analogical, which do resemble each other in the likeness of their subjects, as well as in the likeness of their relations; for if there be a mere likeness of relation, without some original congeniality of subject, it becomes a comparison

of true proportion, which does not admit of moral analogy." From the length into which the discussion on this part of the subject is carried, it would seem that on each side it has been considered as intimately connected with the main consideration at issue. To us it appears rather a pure question of general literature. If, indeed, "analogy" were the term used in Scripture, when spirituality, knowledge, power, and moral attributes, are ascribed to God, it would be necessary to settle the question, whether analogy signifies a mere relation, or an essential resemblance, or both. But when the Scriptures speak of man, as made in "the image of God" and after the "similitude of God," and as being "the image and glory of God," and of the "new man," as being "renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him;" and when we are exhorted to be "holy as God is holy," and "merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful;" there is a resemblance of one nature to another nature, and of one moral quality to another moral quality, too distinctly pointed out to need the least aid from a discussion which is employed to fix the logical sense of the term "analogy;" and especially when it is not pretended on either side, that one thing may not, in nature and quality, as well as in relation, be like another. Of this common-sense opinion, the artifices of logic have not yet deprived us. Mr. Grinfield's observations on the subject will, however, tend to confirm the usual theological use of the word "analogy;" and in this he is supported by an overwhelming authority. We close the subject with the following passage from Bishop Browne's *Procedure of Human Understanding*:—"To sum up the difference then between divine metaphor and divine analogy in full: Metaphor expresses only an imaginary resemblance or correspondency; analogy conveys the conception of a correspondent reality or resemblance. Metaphor is rather an allusion than a real substitution of ideas; analogy is a proper substitution of notions and conceptions. Metaphor, at best, is but the using a very remote and foreign idea to express something already supposed to be more exactly known; analogy conveys something correspondent and answerable, which could be now no otherwise usefully and really known without it.

Metaphor is mostly in words, and is a figure of speech ; analogy, a *similis ratio*, or proportion of things, and an excellent and necessary method or means of reason and knowledge. Metaphor uses ideas of sensation to express immaterial and heavenly objects, to which they can bear no real resemblance or proportion ; analogy substitutes the operations of our souls, and notions mostly formed out of them, to represent divine things, to which they bear a real though unknown correspondency and proportion. In short, metaphor has no real foundation in the nature of the things compared ; analogy is founded in the very nature of the things on both sides of the comparison ; and the correspondency or resemblance is certainly real, though we do not know the exact nature, or manner, or degree of it ; at least we may safely presume this from the truth and veracity of God, who has thus made his revelations to mankind under the analogical conceptions and language of this world."

## REVIEW XII.

*Letters on the State of Christianity in India ; in which the Conversion of the Hindoos is considered as impracticable : To which is added, a Vindication of the Hindoos, male and female, in Answer to a severe Attack made upon both by the Rev. \* \* \* \*. By the Abbé J. A. Dubois, Missionary in Mysore, Author of the Description of the People of India. 8vo. pp. 222. London, 1823.*

THE author of this volume is a Catholic Missionary ; and the motto of his book, taken from St. Paul, “ *Cujus vult misereatur, et quem vult indurat,*” (Rom. ix. 18,) is the easy pillow on which he reposes, after thirty-two years of service in his Missionary capacity, without, according to his own confession, having made one sincere convert. The Abbé himself has laboured among the Hindoos without success ; the Catholic Missionaries, for several ages, have made the experiment, and failed ; Protestantism, of course, cannot triumph, when the only true Church has been repulsed, or shamefully defeated ; the day of grace, as to the Hindoos, is past ; they are under the law of reprobation ; this dispensation of God is awful, but mysterious and silencing ; for “ he has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” This is the argument of the volume ; an account of which we proceed to lay before our readers. Hope, as to the conversion of the Hindoos, it seems, has fled from the Catholic Church ; it exists, however, in renewed and increasing vigour among Protestants ; and though the good Abbé seems anxious enough to convey the effect of his torpedo-touch, through his own Church, to all Missionary Societies, we are but little apprehensive of the effect. On the contrary, we think that no one can rise from its perusal, without feeling a new impulse given to his hope as to the effect of the application of Christianity to the case of the inhabitants of India, since the failure on which the Abbé so feelingly dwells,

appears plainly to have arisen from its non-application. Christianity has not failed in the hands of the Catholic Missionaries to overthrow the superstitions of Hindostan ; but an amalgam of Christian and heathen forms, of zeal and worldliness, has failed, as might have been predicted.

In these letters two objects are proposed : The first is to prove that the conversion of the Hindoos is impracticable ; the second, that the translations of the holy Scriptures, circulated among them, so far from conducing to this end, will, on the contrary, increase the prejudices of the natives against the Christian religion, and prove, in many respects, detrimental to it.

To support the first position, the author presents us with a sketch of the history, the fortunes, and the failure of the Catholic Mission, which, for the facts which it lets slip, is curious and instructive ; but, in the inferences to which it leads, bears very much in a direction which the author did not intend.

Xavier's renunciation of the hopeless attempt to convert the Indians is first noticed. His "Jesuit brethren in Europe" were not, however, deterred by his failure. They were sent from every Catholic country to India. At their first outset, they "announced themselves as European Brahmins," come from a distance of five thousand leagues, to import and to receive knowledge from their "brother Brahmins." By their knowledge of astronomy and medicine they ingratiated themselves with the natives, put on the Hindoo dress, imitated their customs, painted their foreheads with sandalwood,—a symbol of idolatry,—being nothing more or less than the "mark of the" pagan "beast on their forehead ;" and thus, as our Abbé piously observes, after "the example of St. Paul, 'unto the Jews they became as Jews, that they might gain the Jews ; to them that were without law, as without law ; they were made all things to all men, that they might gain some.'" This reference to St. Paul is pitiable and disgusting ; and, as St. Paul by his compliances did "gain some," and the Jesuits, by the Abbé's confession, have, in truth, gained none, he might have suspected, that the



compliances of the Missionaries of Loyola were of an essentially distinct kind from those of the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

They made, however, numerous converts, of a kind hereafter to be described by our author himself; and things were going on "in this promising manner," when they were accused by the Friars to the See of Rome of "tolerating and winking at all kinds of idolatrous superstitions among their proselytes, and of having themselves rather become converts to the idolatrous worship of the Hindoos, by conforming to many of their practices and superstitions, than making Indians converts to the Christian religion." This seems sufficiently in proof that they did not very exactly follow "the example of St. Paul," who, certainly, never gave any one reason even to suspect that he had turned Jew, or had become a worshipper of Jupiter or Diana, at Rome or at Ephesus.

Each party appealed to the Pope; the charges against the Jesuits were reiterated,—they partly admitting and partly extenuating their pagan conformity; and the controversy was kept up for about forty years. At length the Holy See decided against the Jesuits; and orders were sent out to check their most culpable acts; "but what they had foreseen happened; a great number of proselytes preferred renouncing the new religion and abandoning their practices; a stop was put to conversions, and the Christian religion began to become odious to the Hindoos on account of its intolerance."

The Abbé appears to be clearly of opinion that Pope Benedict XIV was wrong, and the Jesuits right: But another misfortune befel them, not less fatal to the success of their enterprise. The contests for dominion between the English and the French happened "at the very time," and made the Hindoos acquainted with Europeans, till then almost unknown to the natives of the interior. The secret then came out. The Hindoos soon found "that those Missionaries, whom their colour, their talents, and other qualities, had induced them to regard as such extraordinary beings, as men coming from another world, were, in fact, nothing else but disguised *Fringy*, (Europeans,) the same contemptible *Fringy* who

had of late invaded their country." "This comes of scheming," as Dr. Johnson used to say; and more especially where honour and honesty are most demanded: The discovery "proved the last blow to the interests of the Christian religion, and no conversions were made."

This sketch of the history of the Romish Church in India, from which we have selected the above particulars, cannot be read without shame and blushing by any who feel for the honour of Christianity in the pagan world. The fall of such a superstructure, however promising at first, is no matter of surprise. The Missionaries employed went to their work of converting men to a religion of truth and honesty, under delusive pretences. By our author's representation, they carried on an imposture, until an unlucky event exposed it; and they mingled Christianity with a Heathenism so gross, that even a Church, not over nice as to this kind of worldly policy, could not tolerate it. Their work, in its best period, had upon it the mildew and the blasting of the God of truth; and its apparent bloom and richness were the effect of the rottenness of the core,—the luxuriance of corruption, and not the swell and the hue of a healthy and heaven-invigorated vegetation.

The present state of Christianity, among the Catholic converts and its proselytes, is thus described by the author:—

"There is not at present in the country more than a third of the Christians who were to be found in it eighty years ago, and this number diminishes every day by frequent apostasy. It will dwindle to nothing in a short period; and if things continue as they are now going on, within less than fifty years there will, I fear, remain no vestige of Christianity among the natives.

"The Christian religion, which was formerly an object of indifference, or at most of contempt, is at present become, I will venture to say, almost an object of horror. It is certain that, during the last sixty years, no proselytes, or but a very few, have been made. Those Christians who are still to be met with in several parts of the country, and whose number (as I have just mentioned) diminishes every day, are the

offspring of the converts made by the Jesuits before that period. The very small number of proselytes who are still gained over, from time to time, are found among the lowest tribes; some are individuals who, driven out from their castes, on account of their vices or scandalous transgressions of their usages, are shunned afterwards by every body as outlawed men, and have no other resource left than that of turning Christians, in order to form new connexions in society; and you will easily fancy that such an assemblage of the offals and dregs of society only tends to increase the contempt and aversion entertained by the Hindoos against Christianity." (Pages 12, 13.)

Again, after stating the number of Christians in the several remaining Catholic Missions, he concludes as follows:—

"From this short general sketch of the several Missions in the peninsula, you will perceive that the number of Neophytes, although reduced to no more than a third of what it was about seventy years ago, is yet considerable; and it would afford some consolation, if at least a due proportion amongst them were real and unfeigned Christians. But, alas! this is far from being the case. The greater, the by far greater, number exhibit nothing but a vain phantom, an empty shade, of Christianity. In fact, during a period of twenty-five years that I have familiarly conversed with them, and lived among them as their religious teacher and spiritual guide, I would hardly dare to affirm that I have any where met a sincere and undisguised Christian." (Pages 62, 63.)

The above representations are sufficiently melancholy; but they are full of instruction. A failure, then, has occurred in the attempt to Christianize the Hindoos by Catholic Missionaries. But before the conclusion of the Abbé can be admitted, that their conversion is utterly impracticable, and that they are now irrecoverably shut up in judicial blindness and obduracy, the principles on which those Missions have been conducted must pass under review; and we think that it will sufficiently appear that a bold attempt has been made in this book to throw the want of success upon a supposed mysterious judicial dispensation of Heaven, instead of honestly

placing it where it ought, in all fairness, to rest,—upon the folly and the faithlessness of man. A more complete exposure of treachery to Christianity, on the part of its professed friends and Ministers, was never made ; and if it had not proceeded from a Catholic Missionary himself, it would have been reputed slander.

Let us take, in the first place, the account which the Abbé gives of himself, as a specimen of the proceedings of Catholic Missionaries in India. His first principle, as he tells us, was to stand upon the defensive. “I have always made it my rule, in the visits I from time to time receive from Pagans of every caste, never to obtrude myself upon them on religious subjects unless urged by them.”

This explains much. First, he did not seek out the Heathen, but waited to be visited by them ; and, secondly, he did not “obtrude” his religious views, except when “urged by them.” The natural conclusion among the Hindoos would, therefore, be, either that the Abbé had not a religion worth being in earnest about, or, that he did not consider it as a matter of any concern to them. At least, the example of St. Paul was not here followed, who visited rather than waited to receive visits, and so far obtruded himself, as to testify “repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” both to Jews and Greeks ; commanding men every where to repent. The principle was opposite in the outset ; and an opposite result was a natural consequence.

His second rule, he tells us, was not to imitate the conduct of certain uncivil and intolerant persons, who tell the Hindoos “that all their gods are nothing else but demons, and that they would go to hell for their idolatry.” Carrying the notion of the courtly Dean, who dared not “mention hell to ears polite,” somewhat farther, the Abbé seems to have refrained from mentioning it to ears barbarian ; and so his Hindoos, not having understood from him that they were in any danger, would very prudently, as we think, prefer remaining in a religion which put them in no hazard, to being renounced and persecuted by their friends, as the consequence of embracing a new one. The very motive to make such sacrifices was

withheld ; and yet the Abbé complains that they would not venture upon them !

The Apostles, however, were guilty of precisely the same incivility and intolerance from which the Abbé, in so laudatory a manner, frees himself. From their lips the Pagans of Greece and Rome certainly heard that their gods were devils, and that they were all guilty before God, and liable to condemnation. What then is the contrasted result ? The thunders of primitive Preachers shook down the fabric of the superstitions, which had, for ages, been accumulating and cementing ; and our civil and tolerant Missionary returns from his thirty-two years of evangelical service to tell us, that he has not made a true Christian, and that the labours of his brethren have been as unsuccessful as his own.

A third principle on which the Catholic Missions have been conducted, is that of accommodating Christianity to Paganism, or rather of adulterating it with that impure and abhorrent mixture. In its purest form, Popery exhibits itself as the ape of ancient Heathenism ; and its Christianity was destroyed by the very opinion which led to still greater conformity to it in India, that Pagans are to be won by a religion of show, and parade, and ceremony, adapted to the senses of a “ carnal people.” Thus argues the Abbé :—

“ If any of the several modes of Christian worship were calculated to make an impression and gain ground in the country, it is no doubt the Catholic form, which you Protestants call an idolatry in disguise ; it has a *pooga* or sacrifice ; (the mass is termed by the Hindoos *pooga*, literally sacrifice ;) it has processions, images, statues, *tirtan* or holy water, fasts, *tittys* or feasts, prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, &c. ; all which practices bear more or less resemblance to those in use among the Hindoos. Now, if even such a mode of worship is become so objectionable to the natives, can it be reasonably expected that any one of the simple Protestant sects will ever prosper among them ?” (Pages 18, 19.)

Now, we would ask, did it never strike our author, that one of his own great mistakes, and that of his brother Missionaries, lay in this very point, on which so much stress is placed ?

For, to say nothing on what is so obvious, that the first Preachers of the Gospel made no such parade, and enjoined no such religious raree-shows, even when "the churches had rest," did it never occur to them, that in ceremonies and processions of every kind the Hindoos could beat them hollow; and that a trumpety festival among these low-cast converts could bear no comparison with "the pomp of circumstance" brought forth by the wealth, the power, and the pagantry of a state-idolatry? Gunpowder and fire-works have helped them much as exhibitions in some of their churches in India; but "with all appliances and means to boot," which have been furnished by a knowledge of European chemistry and mechanism, their policy served them little, when they conceived the project of putting Christianity to the test by a rivalry with Hindoo Paganism in show, and adaptation to the senses of a carnal people. If the Pope and his Cardinals in scarlet had been transported to India, to head one of their processions, they would still have been outdone, in the mind of a Hindoo, by a festival of Juggernaut, when in the acme of his popularity.

The experiment, however, has been tried, and the Abbé shall himself describe the effect:—

"This Hindoo pagantry is chiefly seen in the festivals celebrated by the native Christians. Their processions in the streets, always performed in the night-time, have indeed been to me at all times a subject of shame. Accompanied with hundreds of tom-toms, small drums, trumpets, and all the discordant noisy music of the country; with numberless torches, and fire-works; the statue of the saint placed on a car which is charged with garlands of flowers, and other gaudy ornaments, according to the taste of the country; the car slowly dragged by a multitude, shouting all along the march; the congregation surrounding the car all in confusion; several among them dancing, or playing with small sticks, or with naked swords; some wrestling, some playing the fool; all shouting, or conversing with each other, without any one exhibiting the least sign of respect or devotion;—such is the mode in which the Hindoo Christians in the inland country celebrate their festivals. They are celebrated, however, with

a little more decency on the coast. They are all exceedingly pleased with such a mode of worship; and any thing short of such pageantry, such confusion and disorder, would not be liked by them." (Pages 69, 70.)

All this would not take among the body of Hindoos, because they knew that they could do it better; and, where it did take among them, it converted them into riotous buffoons, but not, as the Abbé confesses, into Christians.

The fourth principle on which the Catholic Missions have been conducted, is the exclusion of the Scriptures. This is assumed by the author to be essential to success among the Hindoos, if success were to be at all hoped for; and he has, therefore, a decided objection to the efforts which have of late been made, and which are still in progress, to make them known throughout India by translations into the different languages and varying dialects of the country. "They will," he says, "not only prove inadequate for the purpose, but also be injurious, in many respects, to the interests of religion, by increasing the prejudices of the natives against it." He adds,

"On the whole, it is my decided opinion, that to open all at once, and without a long preparation, this precious treasure to the Hindoos, would be similar to attempting to cure a person labouring under severe sore eyes, by obliging him to stare at the rays of a shining sun, at the risk of rendering him altogether blind, or at least of being altogether dazzled and confounded by an excess of light. It would be the same as the administering of solid food to young babes, whilst their weak stomachs are hardly adequate to digest milk of the lightest kind; it is exactly, (to use the language of the Scriptures,) 'to give that which is holy unto the dogs, and cast pearls before swine;' it is 'to put wine into old bottles, which break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish.'" (Page 31.)

But he would not only exclude Pagans from the reading of the sacred text, but professed Christian converts also, at least, till they arrive at a preparation to use it with suitable comments; a period which seems to the Abbé to be at a hopeless distance.

“I have now under my religious control between seven and eight thousand persons of this description ; and I should be very much perplexed indeed, were I, among so large a number, desired to point out four individuals capable of understanding the meaning of the Bible, and to whom the reading of the naked text of the holy Scriptures would prove of the least utility.” (Page 125.)

Yet, after all this care not to dazzle the Hindoos to blindness, by giving them the full light of divine revelation at once, and the substitution of short compendiums of doctrine, &c., it is rather unfortunately allowed, that no progress towards their reclamation from idolatry has been made. The argument against the circulation of the Scriptures is altogether *à priori* ; and as Missions without the Scriptures are confessed to have been unsuccessful, there is something gained by this concession in support of the opinion, that when both are made use of, a different effect may follow. Indeed, we know not on what ground success could be expected, without an exhibition of the divine record ; because, that being hidden from the people addressed, the authority of the truth spoken was kept out of sight ; the preaching of such Missionaries could be nothing more than a declaration of a confessedly human opinion, with which the hearer was even invited, by this circumstance, to make free, and to reject, receive, or modify it, at his pleasure, and without responsibility. A curious instance of this occurs at page 32. The Abbé, preaching to a congregation of native Christians of his own church, greatly offended them by calling Christ the son of a carpenter, and his Apostles fishermen ; and they advised him in future not to fail to say, unless he would give offence to the Pagans, “that both were born in the noble tribe of Rajahs.” It is clear from this, that these Christians by a misnomer could not have been instructed in the fact that Christianity is contained in a book of divine authority ; and that, considering their religion as founded upon the authority of man only, they thought it capable of admitting some prudential alterations.

Having thus extracted from this volume an account of the principles on which the unsuccessful Missions of the Catholic



Church in India have been conducted, we turn to the object of the work. It is dedicated to the Honourable Court of Directors of the East India Company, and is designed to prove the impracticability of the conversion of the inhabitants of their Indian possessions ; and it would seem, for the further purposes of convincing that honourable body of the futility of all the attempts now making for that purpose by various religious bodies, and of damping any zeal which might spring up among its members to patronize and encourage them.

In this view, all the facts, and all the reasonings, which the author has piled together, we are bold to say, are totally irrelevant. They prove that the Catholic Missions have not succeeded ; they sufficiently establish it, that Missions conducted by the same rules will never make an effectual impression upon pagan society in India ; but they go not a step to prove, or even to support the presumption, that Missions conducted on principles precisely opposite may not succeed. This point is in a course of experiment ; and it will be early enough for the Abbé to draw his conclusions that the Hindoos are given up by God to a reprobate mind, and shut out from his tender mercies, when the Missions now in activity have made trial of their plans of procedure as long as those of the Catholic Church. A number of Missionaries are now in India, increasing every year, who do not “stand on the defensive,”—who seek, and do not wait to be sought for ; who are so “intolerant,” as to “command the Hindoos every where to repent” of their demon-worship, and to allow of no pagan conformity in their converts, declaring that Christ hath no fellowship with Belial, nor light with darkness ; who, careless as to what ceremonies may attract the “senses of a carnal people,” preach the doctrine most suitable to carnal hearts, “Ye must be born again ;” who, finally, take the authenticated record of the will of God, show its evidences, explain its doctrines, and establish their teaching upon it, so as to secure the advantage of its authority. With all this they are as unoffending and meek, as those who have made it their first rule to take the Hindoos by the guile of accommodation to their superstitions. They relieve their poor, instruct their children, and give no

offence by violating innocent customs. The progress of this plan will for a time be slow. They will not have to boast of proselytism ; but they have been encouraged by conversion, in its true sense, which is better. They will not make their churches the receptacles of those expelled from other castes, the source from which, as the Abbé has informed us, the Catholic churches have been chiefly fed ; but, without rejecting any who desire instruction, they will admit none but those who put off entirely their former conversation. In the mean time, the truth of the Scriptures, no longer hidden, spreads silently through the Indian population ; what was shameless becomes more shameful ; the standard of morals rises ; the dormant intellect is awakened ; and, as all accounts agree, the prejudices in favour of idolatry, around the centres of their operations, visibly decline. Let this way of enlightening and converting Pagans, so accordant with that adopted by the primitive Preachers of Christianity, be persevered in ; and, formidable as the difficulties are, we do not fear the result, under that blessing of God, which is never withheld from works done under his own direction, and in his prescribed manner. The Abbé, it is true, assumes that Protestant Missions have been as unsuccessful as his own. But on this point he has evidently taken no pains to inform himself. The Baptists of Serampore, for instance, he tells us, will, if asked “on their honour and conscience,” as to their success, confess that their labours have been useless. Not so. Let their Reports be consulted, drawn up with as much “honour and conscience” as the Abbé could desire, and he will learn, that besides many converts who have honoured their profession, not only in life, but in death, they reckon several hundred members of their churches completely saved from the practice of superstition and idolatry. Other Missions, according to their duration, and the number of agents employed, have had equal proof that no bar of judicial dereliction has shut out the Hindoo from the mercies of the Gospel.

The volume on which we have made these remarks, if it prove any thing, proves the necessity of persevering in the application of Christianity in its native simplicity and power,

as the instrument of enlightening and sanctifying India ; and of leaving the calculating accommodations of a worldly policy for the spirit of faith in the promises of God, and the predictions of the salvation of Gentiles. And we dismiss it, more fully confirmed in the cheering belief that the enterprises which now interest Protestant Christians, in behalf of the whole pagan world, will, in their happy result, raise an everlasting monument to the power and sufficiency of the unadulterated Gospel, as the instrument of the salvation of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. We see in modern Protestant Missions less contrivance and more faith, less of man, and more of God, than in those described by our author ; and, on that account, we expect a result directly opposite.

## REVIEW XIII.

*A Narrative of the Establishment and Progress of the Mission to Ceylon and India, founded by the late Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D., under the direction of the Wesleyan-Methodist Conference : Including Notices of Bombay, and the Superstitions of various religious Sects at that Presidency, and on the Continent of India. With an introductory Sketch of the Natural, Civil, and Religious History of the Island of Ceylon. By W M. Harvard, one of the Missionaries who accompanied Dr. Coke. 8vo. pp. 404. 9s. bds. London, 1823.*

THE Wesleyan Mission in Ceylon has been crowned with a success so eminent, and has done so much to show, not merely to the passive approvers of attempts to convert the Heathen, but to their most ardent advocates, the possibility of overcoming real difficulties, and the non-existence of many imaginary ones, that such a narrative as that before us must be considered as a most acceptable work to all who feel an interest in tracing the steps of such an enterprise, and in thus enlarging their knowledge of what is necessary, and what is practicable, in this department of religious benevolence.

It has been stated by a wise and observing judicial character, long resident in India, that the attention of many Europeans, both in India and at home, to whom the success of eastern Missions remained very problematical, was, from the first, turned to the Wesleyan Mission in Ceylon, as to an experiment, the result of which would determine their opinions. That experiment has been made, and in no point whatever has it failed. Such is the issue for which the friends of Missions, of India, and of man, are bound to offer their thanksgivings to Almighty God. It has traced, as with a path of light, the line of Christian duty, and opened a course to those refreshing hopes of the possible recovery of our fallen world, which, though always cherished by the good, were often chained down in their flight by numerous doubts and misgivings, pro-

duced equally by the existence of formidable difficulties before, and the calculations of too worldly a prudence within. Till the experiment of modern Missions in the east (among which the Wesleyan Mission in Ceylon holds one of the most prominent places) was actually made, even the most sanguine were chargeable with neither sufficiently estimating the amplitude of existing opportunities for instructing the idolaters of that part of the world, nor doing sufficient honour to the power and influence of Christianity. For what was comparatively cold and heartless then, palliations may be found ; but how aggravated would indifference be now !

We are far, indeed, from losing sight of the obstacles and discouragements which have occurred. We know, too, that even ardent desires for large and sudden achievements have, with many, given birth to expectations which could not, in the nature of the case, be realized, unless something more special and extraordinary in divine operation than has occurred since the days of the Apostles had been vouchsafed. The evils we blame in others are often rather the faults of human nature, than those of particular classes and times ; and we, as well as the carnal Pharisees, have need to be reminded that “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” Extravagant demands upon the result of an enterprise often arise from previous apathy, according to that law, whatever it may be, by which extremes approach ; and as often in the way of direct cause and effect, though the latter case is not so often adverted to. Every thing is put in an extreme position when the difficulties are calculated, and when the only end supposed to be worthy of the task of struggling with them is stated ; and the object once undertaken, and the means once applied, nothing is to be deemed success below that standard. Not only must “the lion in the way” be found to be, in fact, as fierce and large as fancy has feigned ; but one of the full proportions as to size, and equally fell as to temper, must be stretched lifeless at their feet, before any thing is thought to be achieved.

We are satisfied, however, to meet this class of persons very much on their own ground. We do not, indeed, pre-

tend that the monster of Cingalese superstition has thus fallen before the spirited combatants who have been sent forth ; but we are satisfied that it has received wounds more home, and more numerous, than such calculators ever anticipated, and that the way is now cleared, not merely along the main road for direct progress, but for collateral operations on the right and left, to the full extent of the interesting country of Ceylon.

Not to be aware of difficulties in the attempt to evangelize a pagan country, is not to be aware of the depth of human depravity, of the real, practical, and moral effect of the errors which there enslave the mind, and of the superstitions which pervert and distort the imagination and feelings. To plead these difficulties against the administration of the Gospel, would be, by a strange process of reasoning, to plead the disease against the application of the remedy. The first agents employed in the Ceylon Mission, men who have approved their zeal, patience, and prudence in all the trying circumstances of a new and arduous enterprise, found the professed Christians of that country Pagans under a better name, and its professed Pagans theoretically perverted by a deep and metaphysical system of Atheism, and practically enslaved by the foul and debasing worship of demons, and the influence of dark and brooding superstitions. Cruelty, deceit, and the whole variety of vice, filled up the dark shades of the moral portrait ; and to the instructions of the Christian Preacher was opposed either resistance or apathy,—of the two the source of the greatest discouragement. These are not peculiar to Ceylon ; they will be found under different combinations wherever the apostasy of idolatry and religious falsehood has spread, and wherever nations have been plunged into that most appalling state, where vice knows no check but from vice, and error meets with no refutation but from error ; where the corrective of true religion is wholly gone, and the foulest stream which issues forth upon their society and their institutions, is poured from the temple, the altar, and the priesthood. How many years have elapsed since, as to the natives of Ceylon, this description was scarcely relieved by an exception ?

since no break could be observed in the all-involving cloud ; no lighter shade, unless it arose from a darkness more or less compact, the lightest being darkness still ; and since the reign of Satan in that island knew no alarms, and his domain felt and feared no intrusion ? Not quite nine years ; within which time, such have been the exertions of the excellent men employed in that Mission, and such the blessing upon it from on high, that, speaking of the Wesleyan Mission alone, the principal towns in the maritime districts, and one station in Kandy, exhibit their Mission chapels, their native schools, their religious societies ; and the neighbouring villages, their numerous school-houses, chiefly erected by the natives themselves, and employed as well for divine worship, as for the purpose of instruction, with an aggregate of nearly four thousand native children, under direct religious instruction in Christian principles and morals, besides the many hundreds who have grown up under the same discipline, and are now scattered throughout the island. Books have been translated, and are largely read ; and the Scriptures, in the languages of the inhabitants, are now dispersed among a numerous part of the population. Several eminent converts, too, have been made from among the most learned Priests of Budhuism ; several of the natives have been counted worthy, and are put into the ministry ; and one has been already given to the southern part of Continental India, as a teacher of its Gentiles “ in faith and verity,” and is engaged in incessant and devoted labours to spread the “ marvellous light ” into which he himself has been brought. In all this, judging both from the Narrative before us, and what we know from other sources, no worldly inducements have been held forth,—for the agents employed had none to offer ; and no compromise of Christianity has been made with error, with prejudice, or with vice. That divine system has been proposed in its most repulsive form, because in that simplicity in which it is most objectionable to the heart of carnal man ; and the conclusion, therefore, is, that where it has been embraced and avowed, the desired impression has been made, in different degrees, both upon the judgment and upon the heart. We know not how much this

may have exceeded the hope of some, or sunk below that of others ; but, to every considerate mind, it will appear that an evident work of God has been commenced, for which gratitude is due, and from which spring the most cheering hopes. It can no longer be doubted whether access can be had to Heathenism by the Ministers of Christ ; whether they can obtain a hearing for their divine doctrine ; whether Europeans, in influential stations, are disposed to promote the peaceable and pure administration of Christianity ; whether native schools can be conducted on Christian principles, and for Christian objects ; whether the natives are convertible ; (if we may use a word which had never been suggested but for the doubts of some ;) and, above all, if real conversions, testified by hallowed lives and peaceful deaths, be the proof, it can no longer be doubted, whether God is in the work of modern Missions, and will give them his sanction. Every objection to Missions which we have ever heard is thus met by the history of this Ceylon Mission alone : The men who first went forth have thrown open the door to the zeal and piety of Christians at home ; they have themselves laboured to loss of health, and hazard of life ; and it remains to be seen whether their work will be cherished, and new enclosures be added to those already gained by their labours from the wilderness, and which are now springing up with cheering and healthful verdure. Happily, no indications of abated energy in this glorious Mission present themselves, and we trust never will ; for we could conceive of no dereliction, on the part of the Methodist Connexion, more criminal, than the neglect of a work marked, from its earliest stages, by the special loadings of a signal Providence.

This is a feature so prominent in Mr. Harvard's Narrative, that, without any effort on his part, but by a simple and delightfully interesting statement of facts, as they occurred, from the death of Dr. Coke to the point in which the Mission might be said to have taken root, the reader cannot but be impressed with it. Familiar as most of the facts brought forward have long been to us, we have been deeply and joyfully affected by retracing them under the



guidance of Mr. Harvard's faithful and unassuming pen ; and we have paused many times, under the influence of emotions in which we are sure every attentive reader of the work will share with us. Indeed, such a collection of interesting circumstances seldom occurs. The entrance of the venerable leader and founder of the Mission upon a new and vast scene of exertion, when the greater part of an extended life had been spent in gigantic labours at home and in America, in behalf of the negro Missions ; the kindling of his zeal to even a higher ardour, when contemplating the idolatry and darkness of India ; the nobleness of his plans ; the complete absorption of his mind in what he felt to be his final and highest effort ; his unbounded personal generosity in behalf of the cause in which he had embarked ; his tender affection for those whom he was leading forth to the sacred warfare ; his sudden removal in all the freshness and hope of his holy purposes ; the difficult and bereaved situation of a number of young men, then, for the first time, absent from their native land, and when no arrangement even for their pecuniary support had been made, because the event which produced these embarrassments had not been anticipated ; the circumstance of their landing in India, without introduction, and at a time when a jealousy as to Missionaries in India, now happily mitigated, existed in the Company and its agents ; the gradual clearing away of these difficulties by friends who were unexpectedly raised up, and that from among men in power and influence ; the manner in which they were introduced to the Local Government of Ceylon, by letters from persons by whom it could scarcely have been supposed that they would have been at all noticed ; the circumstances which opened their way to those scenes of useful and Christian exertion, which they have since so well improved ; with the various alternations of feeling in their own minds, as the present or the future assumed a perplexing or a cheering aspect ;—all pass before us in this artless statement, and make us parties to the events themselves, and sharers in the effects produced upon the faith, the fears, and the hopes of those who were immediately exercised by them.

The spirit of the whole Narrative is that which best becomes all Missionary accounts. It is that of modesty, simplicity, charity, faith in God, and tenderness to men; and at once heightens our esteem for the writer, and our interest in a Mission which we trust has been imbued with much of the spirit of those by whom it was first planted and watered.

The Narrative of the Mission is introduced by a sketch of the History, Geography, and Religion of Ceylon, in which the author has used commendable diligence in consulting the works of other writers, and correcting or confirming them by his own personal observations and inquiries. The most correct account of the Budhoo religion which has yet been published has also been furnished by the author; but this is yet, in a great measure, an unexplored subject, though the leading principles of this atheistical system are sufficiently established. We hope to receive, before long, from the pen of the Rev. Benjamin Clough, one of Mr. Harvard's coadjutors in the commencement of the Mission, should his health be by divine Providence restored, a further exposition of the history, struggles, and forms of Budhuism, for which he has qualified himself, beyond any other European, by his researches into Pali literature. The Kappooism of Ceylon, of which Mr. Harvard has furnished some interesting particulars, requires also a more ample investigation, for which Mr Clough, we believe, possesses the materials.

The spirit of prayer, and dependence upon God, in which the Mission was commenced, is exceedingly instructive and exemplary.

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We should be happy, by further extracts, to present the reader with an outline of the proceedings of Mr. Harvard and his coadjutors in devising and carrying into effect their plans for the benefit of the natives of Ceylon. They do great credit to their judgment and zeal; they bring before us also, under very honourable views, many distinguished characters in official situations there, whose influence, patronage, and subscriptions, were rendered, in the kindest and most liberal spirit, for the

promotion of the moral improvement of the people under their charge, by means of schools, and of the administration of the truths of Christianity ; and they derived efficiency and success by a co-operation of the natives themselves, which, more perhaps than any other circumstance, marks the secret influence and blessing of God. For, that heathen parents should, from time to time, offer their children to Christian Missionaries, avowing from the first their intention to inculcate Christianity in its direct form, along with useful learning, and that in numbers too great for them to take charge of, and that by the labour, or at the expense, of these pagan parents themselves, the buildings used as schools and chapels should, for the most part, be erected, were occurrences which could not have been anticipated, because placed beyond all probability. For these very pleasing, and often deeply affecting, parts of Mr. Harvard's Narrative, we must refer to the volume itself ; as well as for other correlative and incidental circumstances of great interest. The account may, perhaps, by some, be considered as too minute ; a point we shall not contest. For ourselves, we think, that, though a very few abridgments might be made without injury, the very particularity of such a narrative constitutes its instructiveness, and gives it its value. It is to be regarded as the story, not of a by-stander, much less of a distant observer, but of an agent in the work ; and, therefore, it carries along with its details the feeling and the freshness which only a personal participation in its operations, as well as its principles, could supply ; and secures, by circumstantiality, points of information and facts which would have been overlooked by any other than one who had felt the joys and sorrows of the enterprise.

This is a work which we can very cordially recommend, and which we hope will be extensively read ; both for the information it conveys, and because it cannot fail to refresh the memory of those who have felt interested, from its commencement, in the Wesleyan Mission to Ceylon, with circumstances which, as they occurred, afforded them pleasure, and which are, by the author of this volume, brought into one view, and accompanied with suitable observations, or with the relation

of other occurrences, which place them in a clearer light. It is an important record of divine leading, and of divine mercy, in thus opening the door of salvation to the bewildered and wretched inhabitants of an island, whose connexion with the neighbouring continent renders the success of true Christianity there of special importance, because of the agents which must thus be produced to aid in the gigantic labour of evangelizing British India.

## REVIEW XIV.

*Travels along the Mediterranean and Parts adjacent, in Company with the Earl of Belmore, during the Years 1816, 17, 18 ; extending as far as the second Cataract of the Nile, Jerusalem, Damascus, Balbec, &c., &c. Illustrated by Plans and other Engravings. By Robert Richardson, M.D* 8vo. 2 vols. pp. 1080. Price £1. 4s. bds. London, 1822.

THE countries to which these volumes chiefly direct our attention, Egypt and Palestine, are becoming, in consequence of the numerous accounts of their present state by modern travellers, almost as familiar to us as Greece and Italy ; and no parts of our globe present themselves to the thoughtful mind under views so impressive, or so calculated to awaken rich and instructive contemplation. From one of them, that polluted tide of idolatry and superstition was poured forth, which flowed into all nations, and swept away, with its desolating current, the hope and the happiness of countless millions of immortal men. In the other, that sacred fountain of truth and salvation was opened by a divine hand, which, in different directions, has held on its course through the wildernesses and the deserts of our world, and may every where be traced by the living verdure of its banks, and the abundance and healthy atmosphere of the fields, through which, with gentle flow, it spreads its reviving and fertilizing influence. In the one, the oldest throne of Satan was established ; in the other, stood for ages the hallowed and awful throne of God. Every part of the accursed land of Misraim has been polluted by the march of the Priests and votaries of the basest and most grovelling superstition which ever afflicted the earth,—decorated as it was, if such a subject can be decorated, by earthly splendour, and made imposing by the most stupendous monuments of human power and idolatrous fanaticism. But in Palestine, every valley and mountain has been vocal with

the praises of the God of Israel; every scene has been crowded by the tribes going up to worship the true God in his own temple; and every part of the soil has been pressed by the footsteps of that divine Redeemer who "went about doing good," or of those who, before his advent, gave witness to him in their prophecies, or, after his passion and ascension, "went every where preaching the word," and magnifying the name of Him who "bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Both countries are now in a state of violation and oppression, and their ancient inhabitants have given place to strangers. The causes which awakened against each the vengeance of Heaven were different; but in both they are deeply and variously monitory.

But few of the travellers who have given us the results of their observations on these interesting countries have considered them under the views which are suggested by their connexion with the Scriptures, and with the dispensations of Providence. Triflers and infidels have reaped in this field, and both have brought back full sheaves of what was most agreeable to their principles and their taste. There have been, however, splendid exceptions, in travellers of real science, extensive knowledge of antiquity, and respect to Christianity; and among these we may rank the author of the volumes before us. If not, perhaps, very deeply imbued with the spirit of religion, his faith is sound. He is not ashamed to meet the sneers of unbelievers by exposing their follies; or, on various occasions, to surrender his heart to the impression of sentiments, recollections, and scenes, which could only be so strongly felt, and so forcibly expressed, by one to whom Christianity is more than a name. In this view, this book of Travels may be confidently recommended, as not only amusing, and abounding in sensible observation and satisfactory description of the scenes and places visited, but as safe in its principles, and salutary in its general tendency.

We pass over the rapid sketch of the places touched at in the voyage, and also the description of Alexandria, Cairo, and the pyramids, which, though lively, and often graphic, relate to places and objects somewhat more familiar to our readers

than others to which we are subsequently introduced. We may, however, remark, that the first sentence with which Dr. Richardson commences his description of Alexandria is a description of the whole of this once-celebrated land: "It is in rubbish; the enemy has levelled its towns; and the wind from the desert has laid it under a load of sand." Such is Egypt, throughout the extent of its famed and once rich and populous Delta, and upwards, along the banks of its celebrated river, and its corresponding chain of eminences. All that the power of man could ruin is laid in heaps; and what was so massive and durable as not to yield to his appetite for destruction, stands, (either in partial desolation, the result of other causes, or surrounded with squalidness, poverty, or solitude,) only, by these relics of ancient power, opulence, and grandeur, to render the contrast more sensible and impressive. In every part of Egypt the desolations of one age have been piled upon the ruins of a former; and the mind is irresistibly carried along the course of past generations, throughout which, in awful alternation, as to this ancient kingdom, fame and disgrace, grandeur and ruin, merciful interruptions of the divine judgments, and then their irresistible infliction upon pride and idolatry, have succeeded each other, and left an everlasting track of their footsteps behind them. No country, perhaps, presents traces of divine visitation so numerous and so marked as Egypt,—the nursery of the universal rebellion against God, and the patroness of every species of bewildering philosophy and abominable superstition. Nineveh cannot be found. Massive ruins exist near the site of the ancient Babylon; but whether they are the actual remains of the ancient metropolis of the Chaldean Monarchs, admits of doubt. But a great part of the ancient cities and temples of Egypt continue broken down, but not "swept with the besom of destruction." Parts of those temples stand erect, amidst the ruins of the remainder; their lofty roofs still resting upon their massive and gigantic columns; and their walls still exhibiting, in painting, sculpture, and hieroglyphic, the forms and the symbolic history of their polluted religion, and crowded with innumerable objects of their base and idolatrous

worship, from the enormous statue-god, down to the monkey and the scarabæus. Thus the index is kept pointed to the reason of the judgment ; and thus does Egypt stand before the world, a monument, rendered more striking daily by the exhibition of these memorials of her mournful history, of the truth of sacred prophecy, and of the divinity of that Book of which prophecy is one of the most illustrious evidences ;—a demonstration conveyed by every volume of Travels and Plates, whether the author intended it or not, and often, perhaps, against his intention, into every country, and into every family, where those books are read, and those representations traced. “ Behold, I am against thee, and against thy rivers,” says the divine oracle by Ezekiel ; “ and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate. I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause the images to cease out of Noph, and I will make Pathros desolate, and will set a fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No, and the pomp of her strength shall cease.” Every topographical description of Egypt is a comment on these awful denunciations ; nor does her history afford a less striking evidence, in full force to the present hour, of the exact and marked accomplishment of the word of God : “ It shall be the basest of all kingdoms ; it shall no more rule over the nations ; there shall be no more a Prince of the land of Egypt.” How unlikely were these events when Ezekiel wrote ! and what but the eye of divine prescience could discern them in the dark and distant future ? Egypt was then in the full pride and glory of her greatness ; the second kingdom, at least, among the existing kingdoms of the earth ; possessed of great natural advantages to repel invaders, and to secure her throne for a succession of her natural Princes. Shortly after this prophecy, she fell under the conquering and desolating arm of Nebuchadnezzar ; and the Persians, Macedonians, Romans, Saracens, Mamalukes, and Turks, have followed in the train ; no “ Prince of the land of Egypt” has ever had dominion since the Babylonian conquest.

To give to those of our readers who have not directed their attention to Egyptian antiquities, some view of the magnifi-



cence of the temples of ancient Egypt, and the astonishing labour and cost at which they were erected, we extract the following particulars from the description of the temple of Dendera, or, as it is sometimes written, Tentyra :—

“ Advancing about a hundred paces over the ruined brick nuts, we arrived at the celebrated and beautiful temple of Dendera. This intervening space is called the ‘ dromos,’ or ‘ course.’ In some of the other temples, it is enclosed by a high wall on each side, joining the propylon to the temple, and lined with rows of columns, covered in above, forming a delightful piazza for reposing in the shade : In this space were usually exhibited the most entertaining juggles of pagan idolatry.

“ The façade of the temple is rich and imposing, and carved with a vast profusion of sculptured ornaments ; the door is lofty, the sides of which are perpendicular. On each side of it are three massy columns, capitalled with the head of Isis Quadrifrons ; they are partly received into the wall, the base is concealed by rubbish, the shaft consists of several stones, and the top is surmounted by the head of a female, coifed in a Romanized Egyptian head-dress, which passes over the forehead like a turban. The top of the column spreads out into a moulding above it ; and the space above the column, which in Greek buildings would be occupied by the triglyph over the top of the column, is here occupied by the front of an Egyptian temple, with perpendicular or Grecian walls, containing representations of people, some of them in masque, and others not, performing rites of devotion in honour of the goddess Isis, in the character of Diana. Down the sides, the frieze is filled with representations of Isis and Osiris, seated on thrones with their sceptres in their hands, the one alternately taking precedence of the other, and presented with offerings accordingly. Over the front of the columns, and on the intercolumniary space upon the walls, the whole is covered with similar representations, with serpents, and globes, and hieroglyphics.

“ On the cornice is a representation of the sun, under the appearance of a globe surmounted with serpents and wings,

from which issue streams of light on the objects beneath, and frequent repetitions of the hawk, the emblem under which that glorious luminary was worshipped.

“ Passing within the pronaos, the ornament of the globe with wings and serpents is continued along the middle of the ceiling, and alternates with the sacred vulture with outspread wings, and a broad feathered sceptre, held by a ring, in each foot ; the vulture was queen of the air, sacred to Isis or Juno. There are twenty-one figures along the ceiling ; they begin and end with this magnificent representation of the vulture, the guardian genius of the Kings and heroes of Egypt. On each hand are three rows of columns, with three columns in each row, making, in all, eighteen columns, which occupy the body of the pronaos. The columns are of the same description with those in the front of the temple, each of them being surmounted with a head of Isis Quadrifrons, and covered with hieroglyphics and large sculptured figures of the gods and goddesses receiving offerings from the Priests, as on the outside of the temple. The interior of the wall is ornamented with the same subjects ; so that in whatever direction the eye of the spectator is turned, it is constantly met by the representation of objects connected with the mythology and history of the country. The most interesting devices, however, are those portrayed upon the ceiling, which is divided into seven compartments by the six rows of columns already mentioned. The middle compartment has been described above, as containing the representation of two of the most beautiful and interesting objects of Egyptian worship ; the winged globe and the sacred vulture. The other compartments are equally filled with objects of their idolatrous devotion ; so that the whole ceiling may be regarded as a pantheon, in which all the cotemplar deities and their attendants are portrayed, and which would form a most impressive and magnificent object of contemplation, were the continuity of the whole not broken into compartments by the rows of columns that are necessary for the support of the roof.” (Vol. I., pages 187—191.)

“ Leaving the pronaos we entered the temple, which we found very much choked up with sand and stones. The first

apartment has three columns on each hand, all covered with sculpture and hieroglyphics, and surmounted at the top, like those already mentioned, with the head of Isis Quadrifrons. The walls behind the columns are equally enriched ; so that there is not a spot that the eye can rest on, but addresses to the mind a tale of interest and wonder ; though no man can read or unfold its precise meaning, yet each forms to himself some conjecture of the story, and is pleased with the constant exercise of his mind. Passing on, we entered another apartment, which has no columns ; but the walls are decorated in the same manner ; after which we moved into a third, which was equally so, and from which passages go off to small handsome side-chambers, equally ornamented with figures, and stars, and hieroglyphics, and a sort of chain-work along the ceiling, which is blue ; the passage to the right leads to an easy and handsome stair, by which to ascend to the top of the building ; we continued our way, however, straight forward, and entered another chamber, in the centre of which stands the sanctuary, or holiest apartment, all of them rich in sculpture and hieroglyphics. Never did I see a greater field for thought and reflection, and never did I regret more the want of time, than in visiting the superb temple of Dendera.

“ Having finished our examination of the chambers below, we crawled through a passage that was much obstructed with sand and rubbish, and arrived at the stair formerly mentioned. The steps are thin and broad, and the ascent is remarkably easy, and nearly of the same angle of inclination as the passages in the pyramid already mentioned. On each side, the staircase is adorned with large sculptured figures of Osiris, Isis, Priests, and sacred boats, arranged in procession, hieroglyphics, and other ornaments. No part is without its decorations ; every thing seems to speak and move around you, and is so different from what a person meets with in any part of Europe, that the mind is astonished, and feels as if absolutely introduced to beings of olden time, to converse with them, and to witness the ceremonies by which they delighted to honour their god.” (Vol. I., pages 204—206.)

The ceilings on parts of this splendid remain of former but

unsanctified grandeur, are in a state of preservation, and are covered with stars and representations of animals, men, &c. One of them constitutes the so much-talked-of zodiac of Dendera, on which the infidel philosophers of France endeavoured to found an argument to overturn the chronology of the Scriptures. The opinion was no sooner published than admitted at once among the scientific unbelievers of all the countries of Europe. The extravagant chronology of China and the Hindoos had grown into some disrepute ; but the believer in his Bible was now confidently referred for confutation to this relic of the astronomy of the most scientific people of the ancient world ; which, in conjunction with that of another temple at Esneh, was held to be an inexpugnable refutation of the notions of Christendom, on the subject of the world's duration. Dr. Richardson, after a minute examination, pronounces it as his opinion, and offers what appear to be very cogent reasons, that it is “not a zodiac at all, but altogether mythological.” He entertains the same opinion of that in the temple at Esneh.

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Dr. Richardson, we may observe, is not alone in the opinion, that the representations at Dendera and Esneh are not zodiacal. In the Supplement to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Article Egypt, it is stated, that the whole representation is much more of a mythological, than of an astronomical, nature ; and Monsieur Champollion, who has devoted himself to the study of Egyptian monuments, for the purpose of obtaining a key to these hieroglyphics, has lately observed, that “the bold explorer of the monument of Dendera is liable to mistake an object of worship for an astronomical character, and to consider a representation purely symbolical as the image of a real object, and a part of the picture before him.” Allowing, however, even its astronomical character, it, at length, is found to prove nothing. In a memoir on this zodiac, lately read by M. Biot, an able French mathematician, before the Royal Academy of Sciences, he fixes its date at 716 B.C. The whole is in proof of the readiness with which unbelieving minds catch at every shadow, in order to fortify themselves against conviction ;

a temper of mind which argues that they are not inquirers after the truth of the Scriptures, but have ranged themselves in direct hostility against them. It may serve to put our reading youth also on their guard against those plausible objections to the word of God, which are so often raised on pretended scientific authority.

As the study of the Egyptian antiquities now employs so many minds, and the attention of the public will be constantly called to discoveries in this vast field, yet but scarcely entered upon, it will not be uninteresting to extract a few passages from our author's chapter on the Deities of the Egyptians, the figures and symbols of which occur so constantly on their monuments. Some knowledge of the mythology of ancient Egypt is necessary to make these so intelligible, as to give interest to the specimens which are now collected in our national Museum, or which are represented in the plates which usually accompany books of travels. Full information must be sought in works written on the subject; but the chapter devoted to it by our author will be found very useful.

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The valley of Biban el Melook was visited as soon as possible after the arrival of the party at Thebes. Here the splendid subterranean tombs of Kings, whose names have perished, notwithstanding all their care to preserve them, are excavated in the mountain. The valley itself, says our traveller, is a most dismal-looking spot, and the entrances to the tombs look like the entrances into so many mines; and were it not for the beautiful remains of ancient art which lie hid in the bosom of the mountain, it would scarcely ever be visited. Diodorus Siculus states the number of these tombs to be forty-seven.

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It was of one of these tombs that Mr. Belzoni exhibited his splendid model in London; and of the original, Dr. Richardson gives a large description. That the King for whom it was formed, with so much labour and cost, has been ascertained, appears very questionable; and the author more than doubts the construction put by Mr. Belzoni upon the supposed pro-

cession of captive Persians, Ethiopians, and Jews, which was imagined both to afford a key to the name of the Sovereign here interred, and to confirm a part of biblical history. We were ourselves very sceptical as to this explanation, when we visited the model in London, because none of the groups had the air of captives ; and we rather conceived the whole representation to be that of a religious procession. This is the view taken by the author ; and it agrees with every other part of the designs, which are obviously mythological.

The frequent introduction of the serpent into these representations must have been noticed by all ; and may deserve some remark. Many writers, and all, indeed, who have been most disposed to put a favourable construction upon Paganism, have considered the introduction of the serpent into mythological representations as wholly symbolical ; sometimes of wisdom, and, when formed into a circle, of eternity. We are not disposed to deny the symbolical use of this reptile. The beautiful emblem which so often occurs in the Egyptian temples, and especially over the door-ways, the globe with serpent and wings, may be an emblem of the glorious sun, spreading his rays over nature, and “ supported and directed in its course by the eternal wisdom of the Deity ;” or, rather, according to the interpretation which the Egyptians would, in that case, put upon this symbol, by the wisdom of Osiris. The serpent may have furnished other symbols of a moral import ; but we are to suspect such interpretations in many cases ; and we have the evidence of our senses on which to deny them in others. For many of the ceremonies and idol-forms of the Hindoo religion, philosophic speculators at home have invented, not only innocent, but even sublimely moral, interpretations ; but when these were mentioned to the Brachmans, the Priests of that religion, it was rather unfortunate that they had never before heard of them, and took every thing in its grossest sense. This is true of many of the interpretations of serpent-sculptures and paintings. Nothing is more certain than that *ophitatria*, or serpent-worship, was a large branch of ancient superstition, and that it continues in some pagan lands to this day. The serpent was therefore the consecrated visible repre-

sentation of some acknowledged deity ; and to perceive that he was a most malevolent one, we have only to look on Belzoni's plates, or models, where huge serpents, accompanied by dissevered human heads, are seen in frequent collocation. This indicates the horrible practice of human sacrifice among the ancient Egyptians. But this is put out of all doubt by a plate in the work before us, which represents a part of this newly-discovered tomb.

“ Here we are also presented with an exhibition which it would be more agreeable to my feelings to hide from the light, and cover with the veil of eternal oblivion ; but truth must be told ; here a human sacrifice stares us in the face. Three human beings rest upon their knees, with their heads struck off ; the attitude in which they implored for mercy is that in which they met their doom ; and the serpent opposite erects his crest on a level with their throats, ready to drink the stream of life as it guggles from their veins ; the executioner brandishes the ensanguined knife, ready to sever from the body the heads of the three other unfortunate men who are lying prostrate, and held by a string behind him. The Christian's yoke is easy, and his burden is light. See what Paganism exacted from its votaries ! ” (Vol. I., page 299.)

Whom, then, can the serpent represent, but him who was “ a murderer from the beginning,” and by whose agency all the evils which afflict mankind were introduced into our world ? This confirms, too, the Scripture account of the serpent being the instrument by which the mischief was effected. Thus, under his own appropriate emblem, as an insidious destroyer, was the devil worshipped from fear, after men had renounced the knowledge of God, and faith in him ; and thus does the scientific ancient Egyptian agree with the uncivilized negro in Africa, in paying divine honours to the destroyer. So literally is the Scripture to be taken, “ They sacrificed to devils, and not to God ; ” and so truly is Satan “ the God of this world,” according to the Apostle Paul, who, doubtless, principally referred to the power he had obtained over men by means of a gloomy or a licentious idolatry.

We could linger, with much pleasure, in our author's com-

pany, did our limits allow, amidst the ruins of Thebes ; feeling, with him, that though an appeal on the instability of human grandeur may issue from a mouldering wall or a tottering throne, it comes with irresistible force to the heart amid the ruins of an ancient and mighty capital, “ the city of a hundred gates,” once the richest and most beautiful, not only in Egypt, but in all the world. Here the ploughshare of ruin has been driven in every direction by an irresistible arm ; and the fragments only remain to tell how much of the pomp, and pride, and power, of man has perished from the earth. We can, however, do little more than extract the traveller’s account of the celebrated statue of Memnon, sufficient of which remains to connect the dark and ruinous present with past ages of power and splendour, and thus to heighten the contrast.

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By the presentation of copies of the Scriptures, in the languages they can understand, to the persecuted and scattered churches of Christ in Egypt, and other parts of the Ottoman empire, the spark of religious feeling, which has been strangely kept alive under their ashes, will, we trust, be fanned, if not into a flame, yet into something more like glow, until those better days shall arrive when the tremendous yoke of oppression, which has so long weighed down the Coptic Church, shall be broken. The societies which seek out, by their pious agents, these desolate and almost-forgotten parts of the Christian family, and supply them with that invaluable treasure, the word of God ; a treasure which they are anxious to possess, (and their regard for which shows that all right feeling is not lost,) certainly deserve, for this “ labour of love,” the earnest prayers and large liberalities of all who, as to Zion in ruins, “ take pleasure in her stones, and favour the very dust thereof.” The Egyptian Church was once celebrated throughout Christendom, and very glorious were the early triumphs of the Gospel in this base land of idols. The reason of the mournful change is, however, visibly written. Now and then, among the ruins of temples and houses, the figures of the cross and the Virgin Mary, which have taken the places of



Osiris, Isis, and other mythological persons, still appear, to testify that the truth and simplicity of the Gospel were renounced, before God departed from the Coptic Church. In vain was the shadow trusted in, when the substance was no more ; and when the dereliction became general, the wooden cross and the painted Virgin were found to be as little tutelary against the Saracens, as the astronomic and reptile deities of the ancient Egyptians, against the Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Long have these few and feeble remains of a once illustrious Church had to sing of judgment ; but they shall at length sing of mercy. May He who retaineth not his anger for ever, hasten it in His time !

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The state of Christianity in Jerusalem is as melancholy as in Egypt, but in a different respect. In the latter, we pity it ; in the former, pity is mingled with disgust and shame. Our author witnessed one of the quarrels and fights which so often take place between the Greek and Latin Priests and Monks, to get possession of the rocky vault in which the true cross is said to have been found ; and also the juggle of the Greek fire, which, it is pretended, bursts from the holy sepulchre in a supernatural manner, on the anniversary of the resurrection.

“ Need we be surprised,” justly observes our author, “ that monotheistical Moslems deride the Christian devotees, insult them to their face, and call them dogs and idolaters ? Had I been summoned, without any premonition, to witness such a ceremony, I should have inquired, ‘ Who is the God, when such are the rites, and these are the Priests ? ’ But, knowing what they profess, I now inquire, ‘ By what authority doest thou these things ? ’ God is a Spirit, and God is truth, and demands to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. He maketh his Ministers a flame of fire ; not that they should be mountebanks and impostors, but that their devotions may ascend in elemental purity to his throne, while their hearts, like the burning bush in Horeb, remain on earth unconsumed. What then must be his indignation, to be offered mockery instead of praise ! And what horrid profanation of his sanctuary is

this, knowingly and deliberately to pass off error for truth ; to mingle the sinful inventions of man with the Gospel of Christ ; and to call upon God to witness a lie, in the very spot where his blessed Son expired on the cross to atone for the sins of our fallen and guilty race !" (Vol. II., pages 331, 332.)

Thus superstition furnishes an answer to its own arguments. The object of all these pilgrimages, of all these appeals to sense, is said to be to melt, and subdue, and more effectually to correct the heart. This is the plea for crosses, pictures, images, relics, &c. Behold, then, the effect ! If the employment of the senses and the imagination were so necessarily productive of piety, where should we see more devotion, more truth, more holiness, more charity, than on the spot where the cross is believed to have stood, and at the place where the Lord lay, and which so many travel so far yearly to see ? Instead of this, the Greeks and Latins dwell in everlasting hatred ; and the pilgrims rush together to fight their way to a sight of the holy spot, or to light their torches at a fire kindled, not by Heaven, but by the trick of a mountebank, in the garb of a Christian Priest. Happy is it for us, that that which is most important to man is not made dependent on outward circumstances, and that they who seek the Crucified shall infallibly find him in every place, if they seek him with their whole heart. Those who say, "Lo, he is here !" and "Lo, he is there !" only tempt men out into the desert to discover, often when too late, that in their most vital interests they have been deceived. Such localities, where they can be verified by satisfactory evidence, cannot be viewed without emotion by the most spiritual Christian, and may lead to a train of reflections, exquisite in sentiment, and moral in their influence ; but the religious principle must have a previous existence, and be derived, if it exist at all, from another source. "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

## REVIEW XV.

*The Veracity of the Five Books of Moses, argued from the undesigned Coincidences to be found in them, when compared in their several Parts. By the Rev. J. J. Blunt, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. 12mo. Pp. 214. 5s. 6d.*

THIS little volume may be taken as a valuable supplement to Dr. Graves's "Lectures on the Pentateuch;" for it enlarges upon a subject introduced in two of those Lectures,—the veracity of the five Books of Moses, proved from the instances they contain of coincidence without design. Internal evidence is often resorted to in order to detect false history; and it is equally useful in establishing that which is true. The books of the Sacred Scriptures, we should say *à priori*, ought to have a stronger and more cogent internal evidence than any others. They profess to be from God; they must, therefore, bear marks of his divinity upon them: They relate to the human heart and conduct in relation to God; they must present a deep and perfect knowledge of human nature, and a truth in reference to the moral phenomena exhibited by universal man, which no other writings, whose sentiments are not drawn from them, can exhibit: They were written in different ages and places, thousands of years intervening in time, and considerable distances as to place; and yet they ought to harmonize perfectly in doctrine, spirit, and end; because they profess to be from one God, and to contain revelations which have a common object,—to make men wise unto salvation, through faith in the same Messiah. Less than this we cannot demand from them; and if they answer it, this is so wonderful a fact, that it carries with it irresistible conviction. The number of sacred books is sixty-six; and where sixty-six other books can be found, which so harmonize in doctrine and end, it would be in vain to inquire. It is enough, however, that we see in

these this consenting character; and that, as to the other points of internal evidence, the investigation has ever served to confirm the conclusion, that “these are the true sayings of God.” Still it is clear that a single book might have been introduced, which should bear some strong resemblances to the genuine and authentic ones, as being produced by the mere force of imitation; although what end any forger could propose to himself it is not easy to conceive; since, in proportion to the exactness of his imitation of what is divine and holy, his book would be the less adapted to serve a sinister purpose,—the only reason which could have any weight with him. A book of mere devotional poetry, as the Psalms, or of moral wisdom, as the Proverbs, would, in one respect, present a more difficult attempt at simulation than any other; for sublime poetry is seldom imitated without running into bombast; and mimic proverbs are always flat and feeble. We may say, that to produce a tolerable imitation of either, could only proceed from a genius so high as to scorn the fraud, from mere feelings of intellectual dignity; or so humble, as to be oppressed by a consciousness of insufficiency. If enterprised by a man of moderate talents, the failure would be instantly denounced, and the book rejected. On the other hand, to imitate an inspired historical book, though perhaps an easier task, would have the inconvenience of being more liable to detection, from the contradictions or discrepancies which the introduction of a great number of incidents would necessarily present. The attempt would require that the characters of the personages should be equally sustained; the manners, modes of speech, the very local scenery, and many other particulars corresponding to the circumstances of time and place, should be observed; and then the whole must be harmonized with the spirit and doctrine of the genuine Scriptures, with the history of other nations, and with the succeeding dispensations of God to mankind. If we, then, suppose the dramatic character, the nature, the ease, the simplicity of the sacred narratives to be well imitated,—which, indeed, is to suppose an imitation of things which every one almost feels to be inimitable,—still the means

of detection would be very numerous, and, when acutely pursued, must be successful. If such a book had been carelessly received into the sacred canon, we may boldly say, that it would so long ago have been discovered, and so branded with imposture, that it would not have been left to modern critics to bring forward their evidence why the intruder should be expelled from the hallowed inclosure of divine inspiration.

Infidels, and semi-infidel critics, have indeed tried their skill, with ill-natured acuteness, upon the internal evidence of several books of holy writ: Upon none so much as upon the book of Genesis have their experiments been made, critical, historical, and philosophic; for, most of all, this book invites the attempt, from the necessary absence of such collateral testimonies as some other of the sacred books are supported by, and from the higher antiquity with which its story is conversant. But they have all failed; for what aids it loses in this respect, it gains from an internal evidence of superior strength: Nor does it want external proofs, existing independent, not only of the control, but necessarily of the knowledge, of the writer, whoever he might be. These arise out of events of history and matters of fact which are subsequent to his day, however low the date of the book may be brought. The proofs, for instance, of the common origin of mankind,—their universal fall into depravity,—of a common original language, and primitive religion,—could not have been fully brought out till modern times, till all parts of the earth had been explored; and yet all these points are assumed, even when they could not be proved, in that venerable record called the Book of Genesis.

If a fabulous history may be detected by its discrepancies, a true history will be supported by coincidences; and when these are manifestly incidental, and fall out in a manner which shuts out all probability of design, the evidence is the more conclusive. This is the course of investigation which the author of the volume before us has pursued with great ingenuity and success; and we think we may fairly put the case, that unless we can suppose that the author of Genesis

could have anticipated that his work would be brought to such a test in a distant age, and unless he wrote his book so as designedly to adjust the very coincidences on which Mr. Blunt so judiciously fixes, the veracity of his narratives must be considered as established by the internal evidence which is thus educed.

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To the first section of this work, which contains an illustration of a similar argument put in a more extended form, we turn with still greater interest, although it will be seen that we differ a little from the author. It is, that the book of Genesis contains, not only an epitome of the general history of the world in its early ages, and the private history of certain families, but also "fragments of the fabric of a patriarchal church;" which, when combined, are found consistent with themselves, and thereby show a consistency in the book, "as a whole." First, he shows that the Patriarchs had places set apart for the worship of God, "consecrated, as it were, to his service." This he argues from such phrases as, to do things "before the Lord;" to go out "from the presence of the Lord;" to go to "inquire of the Lord." A distinct order of persons, whose business it was to perform the rites of that worship are also discovered; such as Melchizedec, Jethro, and the "Priests" mentioned as a body of functionaries among the Israelites before the consecration of Aaron and his sons; and not only patriarchal Priests, but Preachers, as Noah; and Prophets, as Balaam. As the author, probably, cannot think of a Christian Priest without appropriate and peculiar robes, nor of a church without this external badge of its ministry, he tugs somewhat hard, both at Greek and Hebrew, to make "the goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau," which Rebecca made and put upon Jacob, to be the priestly vestments belonging to Esau, who was a Priest by virtue of his birthright; and the very "smell" of this raiment, he informs us, "savours of things pertaining to God." We are no enemies to clerical vestments, and think that a black coat, and a black or white gown, stand just upon the same ground, namely, custom and taste; but the

author's verbal criticism must go for nothing, were it even more satisfactory, unless he could show that Esau was in reality ever a Priest. This would be a somewhat difficult task ; for, till the death of Isaac, and whilst he remained in the same family, he could not supplant his father in the priesthood ; and before that took place, he had sold his birthright. Still further : Of this same "goodly raiment" we hear nothing more, though Jacob afterwards acted as a Priest in his own family ; nor even is this "goodly raiment" mentioned in the case of Melchizedec, Abraham, and Jethro, who were truly Priests.

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Sacrifices and types complete this collection of "hints" of the existence of a patriarchal church ; and in them all Mr. Blunt finds a "consistency too uniform to be accidental, and too unobtrusive to have been studied ;" and urges the notices of this church, therefore, as a proof of his principle of "consistency without design in the writings of Moses," and, by consequence, of their veracity. Of this argument, as it is put by Mr. Blunt, we, however, confess that we do not see the force, although it is valid when placed on a different ground. He appears to assume that the "patriarchal church," as he terms it, was something like the established Church of this or any other country ; a uniform and regular institution, with its sacred places, Priests ministering in peculiar vestments, and performing, at appointed seasons, certain rites. The argument, then, is, that the incidental notices of these things in Genesis, as they agree with the rites and forms of this ideal institution, which is assumed to have been universally recognised, so they prove a consistency, which, as being introduced without art, excludes all design. Thus a presumption of veracity is established. But the sole basis of this argument is in the imagination of the author ; for he cannot show, from any other part of the sacred record, that a church, in the form he assumes, existed in the patriarchal age. We have assuredly no allusion to such an institution in subsequent books ; nor is it made the ground of any argument in the Old or New Testament ; and as for the incidental

mention of ancient rites and services, in the instances he quotes from Genesis, they cannot serve the double purpose of first giving evidence to the existence of such a church, and then of proving the consistency of Moses's writings. This is arguing in a circle, proving the church from the instances, and the consistency of the instances from the church. We may therefore, indeed, allow, that this assumed patriarchal church is constructed out of "fragments;" and they are truly such fragments as could only indicate a building of the form and dimensions which seems to have existed in the author's mind, by the aid of a very fertile imagination. But why should the history itself be overlooked in the question? If Mr. Blunt had carefully attended to that, he would have seen that not one, but three, patriarchal churches, at least, existed; that of which Melchizedec was the Priest; a second, of which Lot was the head; and that of which Abraham was the covenant head; and that the last so differed in its rites from the two former, as to have, what certainly they had not, the grand initiatory rite and important sacrament of circumcision. Of this, too, the church of Midian, which may be called a fourth church, and had Jethro for its Priest, was also, it would seem, destitute; and as it differed, in that respect, from the church of Abraham, so it might, in several respects, vary from that of Melchizedec. In the sense of the church being the company of faithful men throughout the world, there was truly a church in the patriarchal times, as there has been such a church in every time; but in the sense of a visible, uniform institution, so far is it from the truth, that through those ages one patriarchal church existed, that, as soon as the family of Noah branched forth, and spread over the east, many family churches were produced, of which the priesthood was in the first-born. Gradually they fell into idolatry; but not all at once; and many which longest remained faithful could have no knowledge of or intercourse with each other. Had Abraham remained in Chaldea, he would probably never have met with Melchizedec; and had Moses continued in Egypt, he would not have known Jethro. The argument, therefore, as put by Mr. Blunt, fails; but it may be established upon



better ground. Although there was not in those ante-Mosaic ages one uniform visible church, there was one visible, true, and therefore uniform, religion. This we know from the other parts of Scripture; which either suppose it in the different dispensations of grace which they unfold, or frequently and in various ways allude to it; and of this the Book of Genesis contains many important illustrations. All the instances which Mr. Blunt makes use of as indications of one church are, in fact, (the goodly raiment of Esau excepted, which was probably his holiday dress,) the indications of the continued existence and transmission of this primitive religion. Thus, as the Sabbath was consecrated from the beginning, this religion necessarily had its Sabbaths: As it had typical sacrifices, it must have its Priests or offerers; but these were the heads of families, with the exception of Melchizedec, whose priesthood essentially differed from the ordinary one, in not being hereditary, but confined wholly, by special appointment, to himself; and was of a higher order than even that of Abraham. This is a point on which we wonder Mr. Blunt did not fix, in order to prove that his patriarchal church had a distinction of orders; and that Melchizedec was a Bishop, and Abraham and the family Priests mere Presbyters. This, at least, would have been as good as making "the goodly raiment of Esau" the prototype of gowns and surplices. But he perhaps recollected that Melchizedec had no successors, which would have proved an inconvenient circumstance. Among the Patriarchs there were also sacred places; but that these were permanently consecrated spots, our author does not satisfactorily argue from the phrase, "the presence of the Lord." He would have supported this notion better from the instances of altars; but these arose from the sacrificial system; and however numerous the patriarchal churches might be, and however they might differ in several particulars, yet, as they all adopted the rite of sacrifice, they must have had altars on which the victims were offered. "The presence of the Lord," that is, his visible glory, was but occasionally vouchsafed; and it made the place sacred only for the time; as we see in the appearance to Moses when he received his commission; and

that this glorious appearance had no stated place of manifestation, nor was confined to one branch only of the true worshippers of God, is manifest from the appearances of the divine glory in the book of Job ; and from his passionate wish to know where He might be found, plainly referring to such manifestations: "O that I knew where I might find him ! I would come even to his seat, I would order my cause before him," &c. The patriarchal religion had also its doctrines of the fallen state and guilt of man, and of faith, or salvation by faith, in the promised Saviour, and its revelations of immortal life. Now, to all these rites, forms, and doctrines, the narrative in Genesis, however varied by incident, and however accidental or undesigned the allusion or the event is which contains any reference to them, is always true ; and, as far as this part of the author's argument from "consistency without design" is valid, it is much better supported by this view than by that which he has taken. This argument, however, does not appear to us to be so availing to prove "the veracity of Moses," as the instances he has given from such separate parts of the narrative as we have quoted above, and which occupy the greater part of his volume. It is, however, of some weight in this respect ; but it is still more so as affording an answer to the notions of several German critics, who, in their fondness for building theories upon cobwebs, will have the book of Genesis to be the work of two or more hands. But there is upon it an impress of uniformity in doctrinal sentiment and in piety, and a harmony with the analogy of faith, which refer it to one mind only, and to one habit of thinking and feeling ; and therefore we may conclude to one pen also. It is this constant reference to the hope of Messiah and his salvation, first set up in typical things and persons, and then to be fully revealed in the last days, which gives us the true principle of the uniformity of the book of Genesis ; and when Mr. Blunt loses sight of his patriarchal church, and throws his thoughts into this channel, they flow on with ease and depth.

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Mr. Blunt has not, however, placed the whole of his argument for the veracity of the books of Moses upon the obviously

accidental coincidences which he has so pleasingly and ingeniously adduced as the fruit of his investigation. In this he has acted judiciously. It is an argument good for confirmation, rather than for leading proof; and he has therefore briefly, in his conclusion, left his readers mindful of those more direct and weighty proofs, drawn from internal evidence, which by several authors have been so powerfully exhibited; and with an enumeration of these, accompanied by very brief, but frequently striking remarks, he concludes a volume which none can read without great pleasure, and considerable profit.

## REVIEW XVI.

*Mahometanism Unveiled : An Inquiry, in which that Arch-Heresy, its Diffusion and Continuance, are examined on a new Principle, tending to confirm the Evidences, and aid the Propagation, of the Christian Faith. By the Rev. Charles Forster, B.D., Chancellor of Ardfert, and Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Limerick In Two Volumes. 8vo. 1l. 4s.*

A WORK on this subject, written with sufficient knowledge, and on sound principles, would at any time be interesting ; but more particularly at present. We have lived during the wane of the grand eastern imposture, as to its political rank and influence ; and may possibly speedily witness the entire breaking up of the more powerful of the two empires, of which it is the foundation and the cement. Whatever other results the present contest between the northern Czar and the Turkish Sultan may have, it appears inevitable, that a large portion of Greece will be rescued from the Mahometan yoke ; and that if Turkey be suffered to exist some time longer as a state, she must purchase this prolongation of political being by such sacrifices of wealth, and such excisions of territory, as will render her so weak, so dependent upon the will of the ambitious powers in her proximity, that their fiat alone will be sufficient, at any time, to extinguish all that remains of the power and domination of Islamism. The deliverance of those portions of the church which have been so long placed under the haughty persecutions of the eastern Antichrist for their unfaithfulness, may, therefore, be considered as approaching ; whilst the singular correspondence which prophecy has established between the history and the fates of the twin systems of spiritual imposture and blasphemy in the east and the west,—between the Babylon of Rome, and the Babylon of Constantinople,—will support the hope, that the tottering

condition of the one is the certain indication of the speedy dissolution of the other.

Whatever may be the "time before appointed" for the abolition of that secular dominion which has supported the influence of Mahometanism, or the circumstances of its downfall, the rise of such a delusion, its rapid diffusion, its deep and hitherto undiminished influence over the minds and manners of its votaries, its establishment in the very heart of the Christian church, its blasphemous triumph over the regions which first bowed under the pure and hallowed triumphs of the Gospel, the providential arrest of its haughty power when all that remained of Christendom trembled before its menaces, and its domination over so large a portion of the human race, will ever remain matters of interesting investigation and history. It has called forth various opinions as to its merits, its faults, and its crimes; and the controversy is not yet terminated. The infidel delights to parallel it with Christianity; and is often disposed to admit its claim of rivalry, if not to superiority; the body of Christians have ever looked upon it as a clumsy and impure imposture; whilst a few persons of the Unitarian faith, and some among the coldly orthodox, have dealt with it more charitably, and, as they suppose, more justly; and, with all its errors, have assigned to it a moral influence, and a public utility, as to those parts of the world where it has acquired dominion, which places it in the next rank to Christianity itself.

The author of the volumes before us professes to have made the nature of this amalgamated heresy, and those questions connected with it which bear upon the evidence of Christianity, the study of several years; and to have given us the results of his investigation, conducted upon a new principle. The work, too, comes forth under the patronage of a Prelate of the Irish Church, distinguished for his learning and character; and, so far as literary ability is concerned, it does no discredit to his sanction. It is the effort of a patient inquirer, and a scholar; of one who has great talent for managing an argument, and who can always express himself well, and often eloquently. It is enriched with interesting notes, and with

valuable extracts. Incidentally, as well as directly, it touches many points of importance very instructively; and, on Mahometan doctrines and history, affords considerable information, which will be new to general readers. All this, and even more, may be said in praise of the labours of the author; but, beyond this, the approbation bestowed upon them in several of the periodicals, and in some literary and theological circles, appears to us to have been greatly misplaced. The work strikes us as another rather melancholy instance of the laxity and boldness of thinking on theological subjects, which have recently exhibited themselves in the established Church, from which much mischief to its rising Clergy may be anticipated; and we fear that its novelty, like most other novelties on subjects which have long occupied the attention of thinking and pious men, will be found more gratifying to the enthusiasm of the inventor, than helpful to a clearer discovery of truth. The great theory of the author, we are persuaded, is wholly unsound; and as the reasoning of almost the whole book depends upon it, a great part of the work is thereby vitiated. The scriptural criticism, by which it is attempted to be established, is forced and false; and although admirable ingenuity is employed to render the theory plausible or convincing, the very effort to which it is compelled, sufficiently shows that imagination was necessary to complete the unfinished work of judgment. The child is overlaid by the fondness of the nurse.

Before we examine the argument, it is, however, proper, that we state the author's theory.

Having instituted a parallel between Christianity and Mahometanism, in their advance from silence and obscurity to a dominion unknown in any other age or institution, and in other resemblances and agreements in the general features of their history, Mr. Forster observes:—

“The foregoing short survey of its general features supplies a sufficient index to the parallel which undeniably exists between the religion of Mahomet and Christianity. The obscurity of its origin; the nature and amount of the early obstacles which it overcame; the abruptness of its rise; the

rapidity and extent of its propagation ; its permanency, and inherent dominion over the human mind ; its power, as conquering, to change the creeds and characters of the subject nations, and, as conquered, to absorb the conquerors and their religions in submission to its law ; the severe simplicity, lastly, of its rites, and the abstract and impalpable character of its doctrines ;—these characteristic phenomena in the history of Mahometanism, when taken in connexion with the great fundamental fact, that the religion of Mahomet, like that of Christ, was founded upon a supernatural or prophetic character assumed by its author, altogether suggest a parallel with the history and general features of the Gospel revelation, which, partial and imperfect as undoubtedly it is, could not yet fail to awaken inquiry and command attention.

“General attention, accordingly, has long been excited by this correspondence ; and the spirit of inquiry is still anxiously directed towards it. Nor is the anxiety without foundation. For a successful counterfeit will necessarily be regarded, both by its enemies and by its friends, as the most available ground of objection to revealed religion. In this light, the success of Mahometanism is viewed and treated by the opposite parties. Infidel writers artfully press the parallel ; the advocates of Christianity studiously expose the contrast.” (Pages 22, 23.)

“The disciples of Mahomet appeal confidently to the success of his religion, as the grand test and argument of its truth. The enemies of Christianity have taken advantage of this appeal, to disparage and cast a doubt upon the argument arising from the success of the Gospel. With this view, no pains have been spared by modern infidels and sceptics, to render the analogy between Christianity and Mahometanism complete, by a laboured comparison of the rival creeds, in all the available points of their origin and promulgation. Their obscure rise, their irresistible progress, and their rapid and wide diffusion, have been successively adduced and dwelt upon, in order to level to one and the same standard, the claims of the Gospel, and the pretensions of the Koran. The task was not an easy one. A religion of peace, and a religion of the sword ;

a faith preached by the disciples of a meek and lowly Master, and a faith propagated by force of arms, under the banner of a warlike enthusiast or impostor, were too utterly at variance to stand credibly or even plausibly upon the same footing, with respect to the causes of their successful propagation. The intrinsic weakness of the comparison in these points was soon felt, and the ground silently abandoned, by later and more skilful practitioners in the school of infidelity. These advocates of scepticism wisely transferred their efforts, from the very imperfect analogy of the two religions in their rise and progress, to seize upon the parallel in its strong-hold. ‘It is not,’ observes an eloquent and insidious writer, treating of the success of Mahomet, ‘the propagation, but the permanency, of his religion that deserves our wonder: The same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina, is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries, by the Indian, the African, and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran.’ The argument here insinuated from the permanency of Mahometanism, obviously aims to affect the parallel argument derivable from the permanency of the Gospel dispensation. And while the correspondence of the rival systems is thus shown to be complete in so capital a feature of the evidences, the inviolable purity of the sublime doctrine and simple ritual of the law of Mahomet is further brought into artful contrast, on the one hand, with the idolatrous deflections of Israel from the faith and worship of Jehovah, and, on the other, with the gross corruptions which so early crept in to disfigure the purity of Christianity. The object of the sceptical historian is plain; for once, however, it is easier to perceive the disingenuousness of his purpose, than to deny the validity of his reasoning. In every prior stage of this controversy, the fallacies of scepticism have been sufficiently confuted and exposed; but the validity of the argument arising from the permanency of Mahometanism, and the preservation of its doctrines and rites in their original severe simplicity, may seem established by the silence of the ablest champions of revelation. The admission implied by this silence is the more remarkable, as it leaves unexplained those characters of Mahometanism which



most impress the mind as mysterious and inexplicable." (Pages 24—27)

Mr. Forster next gives a summary of the reasonings by which writers on the side of Christianity have met the insidious suggestions of the advocates of infidelity on this subject :—

"To the popular argument in favour of Mahometanism, founded on its success, it has been summarily and fairly replied by Christian writers, that success alone is no sufficient criterion of the truth and divinity of any religious system. This sound first principle being taken for the basis of their general reasoning, they proceed next to examine the human means possessed and resorted to by Mahomet for the advancement of his imposture ; and profess to discover in these means, seconded as they were by the favourable concurrence of the times, the whole secret of his success.

"The means chiefly insisted on are, the birth and family connexions of the pretended prophet, which threw, at the outset, the weight of personal interest into the scale ; the consummate art and prudence with which he conducted his design, which gave the strength and solidity of system to each step of his progress ; the merit of the great doctrine of the Unity, with which he set out, and which was already immemorially known and acknowledged by the various tribes of Arabia ; his appeal, in alliance with their most cherished prepossessions, to the Ishmaelitish descent, and patriarchal religion, of the Arabs ; the artful accommodation of his creed to the diverse classes of his countrymen, by which he contrived to draw Jew, Christian, and idolater equally within its sphere ; its skilful adaptation at once to the most deeply-rooted prejudices, and the most powerful passions ; the general plainness and simplicity of the doctrines inculcated ; the gross ignorance of the people to whom these doctrines were addressed ; the cogent and opposite motives by which the mission of Mahomet was enforced,—the most awful penalties present and future being denounced against infidels, while the most seductive pleasures were promised to the true believers, both in the present world and in the life to come ; and, lastly, his conclusive appeal to the sword, made to the raised enthusiasm

of a warlike people,—enthusiasm doubly fortified by the constraining tenet of fatalism, and by the most animating hopes and the most alarming fears that religion could hold out to the uncultivated minds, and the undisciplined imaginations, of the migratory Bedoweens.

“ In the joint agency of these various and diversified means, the advocates of Christianity discern the principal causes which conduced to the success of Mahometanism ; especially when taken in connexion with certain collateral causes, growing out of the state and circumstances of the times wherein Mahomet appeared.

“ The miserable and distracted state of the Christian church in the seventh century, is placed foremost among these concurring causes. The heresies which divided, and the corruptions which disgraced, Christianity are represented, at this period, to have risen to the height ; and to have presented an open and inviting field to the aspiring views of Mahomet. Ignorance and immorality, the ascertained and unfailing accompaniments of an unsound state of religion, by their universal prevalence, conspired with heresy and schism to prepare the way for any gross and novel imposture. The collateral provisions for the triumphant ascendancy of Mahometanism were completed by the contrast which obtained between the political and religious state of Arabia, and the internal condition of the rival empires of Rome and Persia. ‘ The condition of Arabia,’ it is urged, ‘ occupied by small independent tribes, exposed it to the progress of a firm and resolute army.’ And as its political divisions facilitated the establishment of a new government, so its religious divisions made the way easy for the introduction of a new faith. It already numbered among its inhabitants, Jews, Christians, and several denominations of idolaters ; and thus, familiarized with an almost endless variety of religious opinions, it was incapable of combined or systematic resistance to the pretensions of a conquering creed. At the period, too, when Mahomet arose, while the once-formidable empires of Rome and Persia were crumbling in the last stages of decay, Arabia, it is alleged, notwithstanding her internal dissensions, was in an eminently prosperous and

flourishing condition. The inference is, that, at home, he found every inducement and encouragement to enter on a career of conquest ; and, ‘after the reduction of his native peninsula, the weakness of the Roman provinces on the north and the west, as well as the distracted state of the Persian empire on the east, facilitated the successful invasion of neighbouring countries.’ The proselyting zeal, and the relaxed morality, of the Koran, the joys of the Moslem paradise, and the terrors of the Moslem sword, appealed, with irresistible force, to the imaginations and passions, to the hopes and to the fears, of mankind. Before a religion thus constituted, in the fervour of its first enthusiasm, all opposition was vain ; while the ground once gained was kept by a creed which united empire with religion.” (Pages 27—31.)

With this course of argument, our author is by no means satisfied. He admits that it contains much important fact, and some convincing reasoning, though not without a serious admixture of alloy ; a position in which we agree with him, although the points which we should select from this triumphant array, as the weakest, would not be those on which we perceive Mr. Forster chiefly fixes. The permanency of the religion of Mahomet, which he takes to be the most inexplicable trait of that fatal apostasy, he thinks is silently pretermitted by the Christian advocate, or made stronger by the weakness and inconclusiveness of his explanation. In the inviolable preservation of its primitive impression, he also concedes that the opponents of its pretensions have failed to do justice to the real claims and character of the religion of Mahomet. He urges against the argument from the despotic power employed to maintain Mahometanism, that it exists among the free Bedouins of Arabia and Africa, and the tribes of Tartary. Against the charges of barbarism and ignorance, he defends Mahometanism, by urging the services to letters rendered by the Saracens of Asia, and the Moors of Spain, under the Abbaside and Omniadan Caliphs. The doctrine of the divine unity, he thinks, could not tend to render the religion of the pseudo-prophet more acceptable ; since all history and experience prove the natural proneness of mankind to corrupt this

fundamental principle of true religion, and to seek a refuge from its abstract severity in idolatrous superstition. Nor does the argument from the divided state of Arabia better satisfy him; and he thinks it sufficiently answered by the fact, that Arabia was equally distracted in all preceding ages, and yet was never subdued before the time of Mahomet; but had defied the most formidable efforts of Rome and Persia, in the height of their power. In a word, the author rejects all merely human or secondary causes, as sufficient to account for the rise, growth, and dominion of Mahometanism, as sternly as he rejects them when urged by Gibbon and his followers as sufficient to explain the phenomena of the success of primitive Christianity. The conclusion, therefore, to which we are brought is, that false and anti-Christian as Mahometanism is, it is as much, and as directly, the fruit of a special providence, and the ordination of God, as Christianity; and that, whatever weight there may be in the argument from second causes, in both cases it inevitably leads to God as the primary cause. Here we shall quote the author's own words:—

“When the successful propagation of Christianity is ascribed to the fortuitous concurrence of a variety of secondary causes, instead of weakening its general evidences, the unbeliever, in fact, suggests fresh evidence of the existence and agency of a great primary cause. The question irresistibly arises in the mind, ‘By what blind fortune, what mysterious chance, have so many independent and unconnected causes been brought thus to concur?’ By the admission of the unbeliever himself, the history of the world presents no period equally favourable to the progress of such a religion as Christianity, as that particular period at which Christianity arose. Now, the advent, in the turning-point of such a crisis, of such a person as Jesus Christ, is an argument for the agency in this matter of a special providence, which, however the infidel may affect to depreciate, he can never hope to shake. The coincidence, taken in all its circumstances, is beyond the reach even of the speculative doctrine of chances.

“Now, surprising as it may be thought, it is not the less

certain, that similar difficulties attend the case of Mahometanism, and the attempt to ascribe the rise and success of Mahomet to merely human causes. If the sceptic has succeeded in making out, in the case of the Gospel, an extraordinary convergence of circumstances favourable to its promulgation, the advocates of Christianity have been equally successful in pointing out a convergence, not less extraordinary, of circumstances favourable to the propagation of the Koran. In no former or subsequent state or period of the world, it plainly is made to appear, could Mahomet have come forward with equal chance of success: The coming, therefore, of Mahomet, at such a point of time, is a problem that can yield to no process of solution, which shall shut out the idea of a special and superintending Providence.

“ The force and fulness of this parallel become still more striking, when the twofold proof of a providential origin is considered, which arises out of the very opposite character of the circumstances conducing to the corresponding issues.

“ Christianity was a religion of peace ; and a peaceful and united state of the world could alone forward and facilitate its successful propagation. Conformably with this necessity, the advent of Jesus Christ, as it has been well and often observed, found the whole civilized world, for the first time in the annals of history, at peace, and united under one dominion, that of the Roman empire. Had nation been divided against nation, at the day of Christ’s coming, all avenues must, humanly speaking, have been closed to the mild persuasion of his Gospel. But the power of man was here unconsciously made subservient to the great power of God ; and, in a sense very different from that intended by the insidious observation, ‘ the conquests of Rome prepared and facilitated those of Christianity.’

“ Mahometanism, on the other hand, was a religion of the sword ; and to the progress of a warlike religion, the union of the nations, under a compact and vigorous rule, must have opposed insuperable obstacles. Its success obviously depended, not on the strength, but the decay, of the kingdoms of the earth ; its establishment could be promoted only by the

divisions and distractions of mankind. The appearance of Mahomet, accordingly, found the once-formidable empires of Rome and Persia crumbling in the last stages of decay; and mutually exhausted, on the very eve of his approach, by external hostilities and internal convulsions. Had the nations of the world, or even the various tribes of Arabia, been then united under one government, ‘the daring project must quickly and inevitably have been crushed by the weight of superior power.’

“The unity of end attained by this remarkable diversity of means, and provided for by a twofold train of preparatory circumstances, at once so contrary and so harmonious,—the growth of ages, and wholly beyond the control or reach of human skill and foresight,—is sure, when once perceived, to arrest and rivet the attention of reflecting minds. To what source, then, is the Christian to trace this wonderful double fabric of scheme and contrivance? What unseen agency can he recognise, as competent thus to order and predispose the great chain of human circumstances and events? What cause, in a word, can he receive and rest in, as leaving room for a reasonable and intelligible account of the phenomena, save the one great primary cause and origin of all things, the special and superintending providence of God?” (Pages 61—65.)

This “providence,” according to Mr. Forster, is not merely permissive, or punitive, but contriving, arranging, and controlling, for purposes of mercy to mankind; and we are thus conducted to the leading principle of this new discovery, upon which the whole work depends:—

“From Abraham, by his sons Isaac and Ishmael, went forth a twofold progeny, and a twofold promise. In each progeny the promise of Jehovah has, in point of fact, had a double accomplishment, a temporal and a spiritual. Isaac, the legitimate heir, through Judaism and Christianity, has given laws and religion to a great portion of the inhabited world. Ishmael, the illegitimate seed, through the primitive Arabians, and the variously incorporated Moslems, has given laws and religion to a still larger portion of mankind. Isaac

new-modelled the faith and morals of men ; first, through his literal descendants, the Jews ; and, secondly, through his spiritual descendants, the Christians. Ishmael effected a corresponding revolution in the world ; first, through his literal descendants, the Arabs ; and, secondly, through his spiritual descendants, the Turks and Tartars. In the case of Isaac, the change was wrought by the advent of Jesus Christ ; a Person uniting in himself, by divine appointment, the offices of Prophet and Apostle, of Priest, Lawgiver, and King ; and whose character and claims are equally unprecedented. In that of Ishmael, the change was effected by the appearance of Mahomet ; a person professing to unite in himself the same offices, as by the divine appointment ; and presenting, in this union, the only known parallel to Jesus Christ and his typical forerunners, in the annals of the world.

“ Throughout the two cases, the force of the parallel is heightened by the appropriateness of the contrast. The blessing promised by God to Abraham in behalf of his sons was necessarily a divided portion, since ‘the son of the bond-woman could not be heir with the son of the free-woman.’ The division, it is observable, is apportioned with strict regard to this grand distinction, both in the wording of the two promises, and in the matter-of-fact accomplishments. The promise to Isaac is eminently a promise of a spiritual blessing ; and it issues, accordingly, in the establishment upon earth, through his offspring, of a purely spiritual kingdom. The promise to Ishmael is predominantly a promise of a temporal blessing ; and it, accordingly, appears to issue in the establishment upon earth, through his offspring, of a temporal as well as spiritual dominion. The birth of Isaac was the subject of promise ; and the Messiah, the heir and dispenser of his blessing, came by promise. The birth of Ishmael was not the subject of promise ; and Mahomet, the only analogous inheritor and conveyancer of his blessing, came without promise. Isaac was the legitimate seed ; and, conformably with the dignity of his birthright, became the rightful promulgator, through Christ, his descendant, of the true faith of the Gospel. Ishmael was the illegitimate seed ; and, consonantly with the

disadvantage of his birth, became the suitable progenitor, through Mahomet, his descendant, of the spurious faith of the Koran. In a word, the parts of this entire parallel lie over against each other, like two answering tallies; the discrepancies contributing, perhaps still more than the agreements, to the completeness of the proof, by the just distance which they preserve between the original promises, as viewed in their fulfilments." (Pages 71—73.)

In order to give plausibility to this view, which the ingenious and learned author himself acknowledges to be startling, and which we need not say we wholly reject, he has followed the common example of theory-builders, by exaggerating or misstating the difficulty of the case to be accounted for, in order to magnify the importance of his discovery. We do not mean that he has done this designedly, for we think him honest; but such is the fact; and it has flowed from the exclusive manner in which he has viewed the subject, to the neglect of several very obvious facts connected with the history of false religions, and the want of attention to those principles in corrupted human nature, from which religious errors proceed, or meet with a ready and permanent reception.

Mr. Forster constantly recurs to the rapid propagation of the religion of Mahomet, as the first step in the parallel between that and Christianity; and as no more to be accounted for from human causes, than the diffusion of the latter in the first ages. We deny the parallel. The propagation of a religion by the sword can never be paralleled with the propagation of a religion against the sword; but on this we shall not dwell. Nor, indeed, shall we mainly insist upon a second point, which is of equal strength with the former,—that whilst, in consequence of the haughty violence of the turbaned and scymitared apostles of the Koran, no time was given to men to examine the evidences of the mission of the Arabian impostor, the evidences of Christianity were, for near three centuries, left open to investigation, and no man ran the least risk of life, fortune, or fame, by rejecting them. Before the power and influence of the state were engaged on the side of our religion, it had no arms but its appeals to men's con-



victions and consciences ; whilst, to believe or die, or, at best, to be treated as a dog, or a slave, was the stern alternative by which Mahometanism was enforced,—a mandate too urgent to admit of deliberation. Its first converts were, in many instances, hypocrites ; and although they might afterwards catch the fanaticism, yet it chiefly allied itself to a blind sincerity, after it had occupied the prejudices of the infant mind by the force of education. The great consideration, however, which destroys the parallel is, that Mahometanism is an instance of a religion making its way by following, or rather by giving a new impulse to, the current of human corruption and fleshly appetite ; Christianity, by sternly reproof and bearing up against both. Progress, indeed, is made in each case ; but here the parallel terminates ; for to institute a parallel between that which impels itself against the propensities of mankind, and that which favours them, and is carried onward by them, is as false in philosophy as it is unsound in theology. Equally fallacious is it to represent the rapid diffusion of Mahometanism as a circumstance which, with the exception of the spread of Christianity, is so peculiar to Mahometanism as not to be accounted for but by a special Providence. We exclude Providence from nothing ; but what is meant by the author is an ordaining, and, to a certain extent, a sanctioning Providence, and not merely a punitive and permissive one ; and if this be true of the religion of Mahomet, because of its rapid diffusion, it is true of many other forms of error,—a point which the author has strangely overlooked. Perhaps the progress of Islamism might be somewhat more rapid than that of many other false systems ; which may be easily accounted for by the plans of conquest which were early adopted by its fanatical votaries, and by the unity of design, and the energy of execution, upon which they proceeded. But the early forms of idolatry were also rapid in their diffusion ; so much so, that the separation of Abraham and his seed was made with reference to the preservation of the true religion in one family only, seeing all the rest were departing from it. The Jews, too, in several instances, almost suddenly and simultaneously, and that without any

external compulsion at all, fell from a divinely-attested religion, supported by continual miracles, into the basest superstitions,—a circumstance much more difficult to be accounted for ; and the systems of Brahminism, of Confucius, and of Fo obtained a diffusion equal, at least, to that which the proudest Mussulman could urge as a proof of the divinity of his religion. So far, then, from there being any thing so peculiar in the success of the Mahometan delusion, as to require it to be referred to a supernatural agency, in the same manner as we account for the progress of Christianity, it was not even so successful as many of the elder forms of pagan error ; which might, therefore, according to our author, as plausibly father themselves upon the special providence of God.

The argument from the permanence of the religion of Mahomet, is equally weak and exaggerated. To say nothing of the difficulty of reconciling the assertion, that the original “impression which the false prophet engraved at Mecca and Medina” has been preserved pure and perfect, with the concession, that, the divine unity excepted, the Mahometan world, on most other points of doctrine and discipline, is split into countless sects and schisms,—it is utterly in defiance of the facts of the history of human opinions to represent this “permanence” of Mahometanism as something peculiar to itself. Granting that the original impression is still undisturbed, the system of the Koran is not the only error that has stamped characters upon a perverted judgment and a corrupted heart which ages have not been able to obliterate. Even the anti-Christian characters of Popery preserve, among the greater part of its professors, a stamp as deep as when they were first impressed ; and the duration of the two errors has been nearly the same. If it should be urged, that where Popery is outwardly professed, there is much philosophic scepticism among its educated classes ; the Soofeism of Persia, and of other parts of the Mahometan world, presents a similar deviation from the original faith of Mahomet,—a similar revulsion of overloaded reason towards the extreme of absolute infidelity.

But there is a still more striking instance in the fact of the agreement between the modern idolatry, superstition, and

error of many parts of Asia, and the ancient idolatry, superstition, and error of Greece, Egypt, and Chaldea. In the pagan philosophy of India, the philosophy of the ancient schools is still exactly reflected ; and the popular idolatry is but the same thing under different names. The "original impression" has been, in fact, more than preserved in eastern Paganism ; it has been deepened and exaggerated, but with steady adherence to the first leading principles of a multitudinous error. Even particular forms of the general system, as existing in the most populous countries of the east, can boast an antiquity and conservation far superior to that of Islamism. Both the Brahminical and the Budhooist systems have existed longer ; and are at this day as full and deep in their impression as at any former period, except in those parts where Christianity has, within a few recent years, been working a silent change, and unsettling the confidence of their votaries. The permanence of the impression of Mahometanism is, therefore, another exaggeration into which the author has been led by suffering his attention to be absorbed by one subject, and by his desire to show that some new solution of the phenomenon he wishes to explain was necessary.

There is, also, in our author's speculations, a very culpable forgetfulness of points which, as a Divine, and a Clergyman of the Church of England, and, moreover, as an examining Chaplain to one of its Prelates, he ought not to have overlooked. He speaks much of Christian philosophy, as available to the extrication of his subject from the perplexity which he has found in it : But, if we understand true Christian philosophy aright, it is the investigation of moral phenomena upon those principles which the Christian revelation has brought to light ; or which it has rendered sure, if before they were but doubtfully apprehended. To attempt to trace the grounds and reasons of things, without regard to such principles, is to apply the "rudiments of the world : " But, in the name of fairness, let this never be baptized by the misnomer of Christian philosophy. Now, for any thing Mr. Forster brings to that part of his discussion, in which he magnifies the difficulty of accounting for the rise, progress, and permanent impression

of Mahometanism, unless it be referred to a direct covenant engagement on the part of God, and to an ordaining Providence, fulfilling, by special interposition, the promises to Ishmael, there might have been no such doctrines in the philosophy of Christ, or in his own Church, as the total corruption of human nature, and the agency of Satan. Such principles might have been at least tried, to ascertain how far they would go to resolve any part of the difficulty of the subject, before so monstrous a conclusion was admitted, as that a religion of sensuality, pride, and violence could issue from a solemn covenant on the part of the holy God; or that he could employ his agency in the lowest possible sense that should imply his favour towards it. Surely there is nothing more obvious in the religious history of man, than that he has bent his strongest efforts, in all ages, to gain the sanction of religion to his vices. This is the key to all the corruptions of the true religion, and to the invention of all false religions; and if Mahometanism did, in fact, appeal to this most corrupt principle of our fallen nature, its acceptableness, on a large scale,—and when it was not confronted with any thing in the form of a religion, but what had emanated from the same source,—may naturally be thus accounted for; since nothing generally was to be overcome, but some prejudices in favour of ancient forms, which were easily broken down by the threats of a haughty despotism. Nor ought Mr. Forster to have closed his eyes upon another branch of the true solution of the case, with which he was furnished in the words of our Lord himself. He sows only good seed; and if tares spring up, “an enemy hath done this.” Who that enemy is, we can be at no loss to discover, since Satan is characterized as “the father of lies;” that is, of all those religious delusions by which the souls of men have been murdered from the beginning. True Christian philosophy, therefore, rightly understood, assigns a much fitter origin to Mahometanism than the covenant with Ishmael; and the father of the whole system being once ascertained, we may conclude that his agency, dark, active, malignant, and intense, would be employed to give it success and extension; whilst the providence

of God had but the same share in this as in the case of other religious delusions, which, when men will not believe the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, and in the errors which sanction it, are permitted to be urged forward by evil spirits, and by evil men, in consequence of an awful judicial procedure clearly stated in the word of God, and upon which the history of human opinions, in matters of religion, affords so many striking comments,—the “giving up of men to a strong delusion to believe a lie.”

We now come to the main pillar of Mr. Forster's hypothesis, which is, that Mahometanism is of God, by virtue of a covenant with Abraham in behalf of his son Ishmael! It is, according to him, an imposture; it is anti-Christian, spurious, and immoral; and yet it was the subject of covenant engagement on the part of God with the father of the faithful, and a matter of promise! In endeavouring to support this monstrous notion by the authority of Scripture, the author has proved himself to be a very feeble critic.

That which Mr. Forster dignifies with the title “the covenant of Ishmael,” occurs Gen. xvii. 18—21: “And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, As for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve Princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac.” These promises on behalf of Ishmael are manifestly of a temporal character; and although a promise may, in a loose way, be called a covenant, yet, in the theological sense, which is that Mr. Forster would put upon the term in order to establish his parallel between Ishmael and Isaac, they are so far from constituting a covenant, that a covenant character, in the sense of a promise of grace and mercy to mankind, or as the foundation of the faith and hope of men in future ages, is, in so many words, refused to the transaction by the Scriptures themselves. All this will I do for Ishmael, “but my covenant will I establish with Isaac.” That God should covenant with Abraham to deceive and pollute mankind through the posterity of Ishmael, Mr. Forster would, of course, be shocked to sup-

pose; hence he is obliged to contend that Mahometanism, with all its spuriousness and error, has yet been an inferior benefit to the world. But, if this could be made out,—a point at which we shall glance in the sequel,—still the promises to Ishmael bear no covenant character. That term is confined in Scripture to the covenant of grace in Christ; or to those peculiar engagements of God with Abraham, Isaac, and the Jews, by which that covenant was transmitted from age to age under special manifestations. It was proposed under the most solemn forms to the faith of guilty man, in order to his salvation; and it excluded every promise to every transaction with others, not only from the same eminence, but from the same character. Its essence consisted in its spiritual promises, ratified by covenant acts and covenant seals; and every thing temporal connected with it was only subservient to the spiritual design. But the promises to Ishmael had not even a covenant form; they were not ratified by sacrifice, as was the covenant with Abraham in respect to Isaac; to which was added the covenant seal of circumcision: Whereas, to the promises made to Ishmael, no seal of any kind was annexed. Vainly, therefore, does Mr. Forster attempt to elevate the engagements of God with Abraham, in regard to Ishmael, into a covenant character. His first argument, strange to tell, is, however, drawn from the rite of circumcision. “The superior spiritual blessing, entitled God’s everlasting covenant,” he admits, “is reserved exclusively to the child of promise;” but we are told that “in the contexts which immediately precede and follow, there occurs a clear proof of Ishmael’s admission also, though in a low and subordinate sense, to spiritual covenant with the God of Abraham; which proof lies in his being made a partaker, with Isaac, of the rite or sacrament of circumcision.” (Vol. I., page 124.)

Now, so far are we from questioning Ishmael’s right to the “spiritual covenant,” our objection is, that Mr. Forster has not put the case with sufficient strength. Ishmael was not admitted to spiritual covenant with the God of Abraham, in “a low and subordinate sense,” but in as full a manner as the rest of the family of Abraham; but then the covenant of

which circumcision was the seal was that which held out justification through faith in the promised Messiah, who was to appear in the line of Isaac. Did Mr. Forster not advert to St. Paul's doctrine, that circumcision was "a seal of the righteousness which is by faith?" and, if so, must he not have seen that, not only Ishmael and his descendants, but Esau and his descendants, and all the other branches of the Abrahamic family, were put into this covenant; and, having the seal in their flesh, had the right to plead it with God, in order to their securing the spiritual blessing? Thus the door of salvation, by the publication of the doctrine of salvation, was opened, not only to Ishmael and his seed, but to all the collateral families whose descent was from Abraham, and to the "strangers" born in his or their houses, who also received the same "sacrament." But all this proves just the reverse of what Mr. Forster intends. He absurdly understands the participation of Ishmael in the rite of circumcision, as conveying something of spiritual grace into the temporal promises made to him; whereas the circumcision of Ishmael was a recognition that the covenant of salvation was made with Isaac, and that all spiritual good was to be conveyed through that alone. He argues as though circumcision was a seal of the covenant with Ishmael, or of a common covenant, which was afterwards "branched off into two portions," though unequal, and shared between Isaac and the son of Hagar; whereas it was the seal of that one covenant of grace which was incapable of partition, and descended whole and entire, as from the nature of things it must do, in one line, until "the Seed should come," to which that faith exclusively looked of which circumcision was "the sign." Did ever any Divine, before Mr. Forster, dream of partitioning the covenant of grace into a superior and a "low and subordinate" spiritual blessing? which is, in fact, dividing it into a superior, and a low and subordinate, justification, or remission of sins!

The author's second argument to prove that a covenant was made with Ishmael, is drawn from St. Paul's allegory, in Gal. iv. 22—24: "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he

who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh ; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory ; for these are the two covenants." One of these covenants, we are told, was that made with Isaac ; the other, with Ishmael, the illegitimate seed. Unfortunately, however, for this alleged proof, which Mr. Forster seems to regard as so obviously convincing that he makes little effort to support his interpretation, the Apostle does not say that two covenants were made with the sons of Abraham ; but that the two sons were types of two covenants ; which covenants he points out in the context to be, not a covenant with Isaac, and a covenant with Ishmael, for, in truth, he speaks of neither ; but of what are usually called the old and the new covenants ; that is, the Mosaic and the Christian covenants ; in other words, the law and the Gospel. Men who profess to interpret Scripture, and especially to throw new light upon it, ought not to garble their extracts ; and if Mr. Forster had avoided this offence against all sound criticism,—if he had not stopped St. Paul short, but suffered him to explain himself,—he would have been conducted to precisely an opposite statement : He would have seen that "the son of the bondwoman" was indeed the representative of a covenant, though not of a covenant with himself and his descendants ; but of a covenant with the descendants of Isaac, made at Mount Sinai ! "For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia ; and answereth to Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children ;" whilst "the son of the free woman" represents "the Jerusalem which is above," that is, "the Christian church," which is, "the mother of us all." Not a word, certainly, is uttered by St. Paul of the author's newly-invented covenant with Ishmael ; whilst, unfortunately for the author's theory, Ishmael is made to represent the covenant with the descendants of Isaac !

A third proof on which the spiritual import of "the covenant with Ishmael" is placed, is the parallel which the author finds in the terms of the promises respecting the issue of Sarah, and that of Hagar. Of Sarah it is said, "She shall be a mother of nations ;" and to Abraham it is promised, "I will



multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven." Answering to this, it is promised to Ishmael, "I will make him a great nation;" and to Hagar, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude." From these similar promises, Mr. Forster argues, that, as in interpreting the promises relative to Isaac we allow a numerous seed after the flesh, and a still higher accomplishment of them in a spiritual seed, composed of believers in Christ; so the parallel obliges us to give to Ishmael, not only numerous descendants, by natural birth, but also, in order to come up to the terms of the covenant, a numerous "spiritual seed" of believers in Mahomet; a view of the case which he thinks confirmed, both as to Isaac and to Ishmael, with equal strength, by the evidence of history. The parallel, however, on which he rests is wholly ideal. The promises to each have been strikingly accomplished in the fruitfulness of the two mothers, and the multitude of their descendants; and it is particularly to be remarked, that there is no other instance of so numerous a people as either the descendants of Isaac or of Ishmael, kept so distinct, and traceable to common progenitors. The whole face of the earth does not offer another example; so that the truth of these prophetic promises remains demonstrated to this day. But, beyond this, the parallel is all ideal, and cannot be carried without manifest absurdity or profaneness. That the resemblance was not designed to hold, as to the spiritual seed, is made plain from the clauses which are thrown into the promises to Abraham which respected Isaac; and which are wholly wanting when Ishmael is spoken of. "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," occurs Gen. xii. 3; and in Gen. xxii. 18, this promise is restricted to Abraham's seed by Isaac, and no where occurs in the promises made to Ishmael. Since, then, the nations of the earth were, in the design of God, to be blessed, as we know, by becoming the spiritual seed of Abraham, and this effect is restricted to the covenant made exclusively with Isaac, the visionary parallel as to a spiritual seed in the line of Ishmael vanishes; and the promises to him of a numerous posterity are, according to their obvious sense, to be confined to his posterity by natural

descent ; and, in that respect, have had an abundant accomplishment. The difference in the terms of the promises made to each son was sufficient to keep Mr. Forster right on this point, to say nothing of that approach to profaneness which is implied in ascribing the "spiritual seed" of Mahomet, that is, a multitude of dupes to an impure imposture, to the efficacy of that original covenant with Abraham, which promised him a spiritual seed ; and which covenant, when branched off into two, one with Isaac, and the other with Ishmael, carried off part of this blessing, though "in a low and subordinate degree," into the line of Ishmael. This is a most incautious attempt, to say no worse of it, to sanctify Mahometanism, by giving it an origin in the grace and benediction of the Abrahamic covenant ; an absurdity and an impiety united, (doubtless without design.) which may well teach the danger of an ambition for novelties on subjects directly theological, or intimately connected with them.

Our author's historical parallels between the Jews and the Ishmaelites prove nothing to his purpose. They are often ingenious ; but with reference to his theory will only provoke a smile, with the exception of that between Christ and Mahomet. This, though a parallel only in circumstances, and a contrast as to character, shocks very justly the feelings of the serious Christian.

But we turn with more pleasure to other parts of these volumes, which, independent of the hypothesis they are designed to support, contain much to commend ; and although the author's passion for parallels between Mahometanism, and Judaism, and Christianity, is carried to an absurd excess, and, as far as argument is concerned, expends his labour to no profit, it has prompted him to a research which brings into view many curious and interesting facts and opinions.

In the chapter on the Koran, we must do him the justice to say, that, although his favourite principle necessarily leads him to take the most favourable view of Mahometanism, his Christianity here asserts a better influence ; and that he has, upon the whole, dealt very

fairly with the literary character of that much controverted volume.

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As to these better passages, however, the author has so many hints of the difficulty of conceiving how those of them came there, which are not plagiarisms from the Scriptures, as being so much superior to any remains, whether Jewish or Christian, of the literature of the seventh century, that we are not sure whether, in accordance with his own theory, he does not think divine Providence had something to do, and that directly, with the composition of this blasphemous, obscene, and grotesque farrago, which, as a whole, even he himself acknowledges it to be. Some such notion, which, however, he is unwilling fully to state, can perhaps only explain the following curious passage :—

“That Mahomet was really its chief author and contriver, (an inference suggested by the whole internal evidence,) we must, indeed, with Mr. Sale, consider a matter beyond dispute. But how far Mahomet was, or was not, acquainted with our sacred volume, must probably remain an unsolved problem to the end of time.” (Vol. II., page 75.)

Now, Mr. Forster has exhibited, in his collection of parallel passages, a great number of exact quotations from the Bible, of passages but slightly altered from it, and of narratives taken with general accuracy both from the Old and New Testament ; how, then, if “Mahomet was really its chief author,” can it be “a problem” whether he was acquainted with the sacred volume,—“a problem not to be solved to the end of time,”—unless Mr. Forster intended to intimate, that the numerous passages in the Koran, which are given as they stand in the Scriptures, or are mere imitations of them, were suggested to Mahomet by inspiration ? and that the passages which rise “above the literature of the seventh century” are to be traced to the same source ? What, then, becomes of the vast mass of objectionable and blasphemous passages, which are quite as old as the others as parts of the Koran, and all together form one Bible for the followers of the prophet, one rule of life, one hope of salvation ? Are they to be

attributed, too, to the inspiration of God, making good his covenant with Ishmael, and setting up a false and rival religion to his own, which was not only to have its parallel history, its parallel Messiah, but also its parallel Scriptures, given by inspiration of God? With such fearful temerity does Mr. Forster approach the verge of blasphemy, or even step beyond it, and that without any apparent ill design; being so infatuated by his theory as not to see the consequences to which it leads! If we admitted inspiration, of any direct kind, in the construction of the Koran, we should think it much more likely to be from Satan, who can, no doubt, conceive fine and sublime sentiments respecting God and morals, and could feel no reluctance to suggest them, in order to gain a little credit for a book, the substance and sum of whose doctrine was to be misleading and destructive to the souls of men; and which sentiments were therefore sure to be neutralized in their moral effect upon its readers. The Koran, however, bears the plain impress of different minds; and the ancient notion, that Mahomet was assisted in its formation by a renegade Jew, and an apostate Monk, appears to us to rest upon strong probability. There might, indeed, be other contributors; or its collection of varieties might be swelled, and probably was so, from other writings then extant. The proverbs of Ali are nearly contemporary with Mahomet, and bear a comparison with the best parts of the Koran. They show the same familiarity with the moral sentiments, and turns of phrase, with which the Scriptures abound; and minds of that order which could so well and so elegantly parody the traditional sentiments of patriarchal piety, or the written revelations of God, were therefore existing in the same age, to aid in furnishing the more elevated portions of the Koran. Infidels have emblazoned such passages by putting their connexion with the gross and impure parts of this Bible of Antichrist out of sight, in order to exhibit it as a rival to the holy Scriptures. Mr. Forster has not done this; still they have been seized upon by him, in order to support his notion, that, after all, Mahometanism must have had some degree of favourable moral influence, and is entitled, therefore, to be considered as, in a

low and inferior degree, a blessing to the nations, as well as a chastisement. But Mr. Forster surely must have known that no civilized heathen nation ever existed, among whom just, and beautiful, and sublime moral sentiments were not known, and recorded in their sacred books. The works of Confucius abound in them : Pagan writings, also, still extant, and largely read, in Hindostan, all would furnish passages often as discriminating in morals, and as sublime in their views of the divine Being, as those quoted from the Koran. But the point which the author has overlooked is, that wherever those good sentiments have stood connected with systems of religion essentially false, so that bad and pernicious sentiments of a countervailing kind could plead the same authority, the corruption of the heart has uniformly turned these even-balanced doctrines to the side of its evil propensities, and left what was just and true in theory without any efficient practical influence.

Even if it could be proved that Mahometanism was somewhat favourable to morals, though, as the author admits, in a very low degree, compared with true Christianity, his great principle, that it was a covenant blessing resulting from God's favour to Ishmael and his descendants, though inferior to that which springs from the covenant with Isaac, could not be maintained. For we at once ask, Is Mahometanism a saving system ? This is not asking, whether any Mahometans can be saved ;—a point we enter not upon. We mean by it, whether Mr. Forster thinks, that faith in the divine mission of Mahomet,—belief in a unity of God, which is an essentially different doctrine from the divine unity as taught in the Scriptures,—and the performance of Mahometan rites, are means instituted by God to bring those who so believe and act, and because they so believe and act, into a state of salvation ? We scarcely suppose he will admit this, even for the sake of his hypothesis ; and if not, where is his “covenant grace,” a branch of which was divided to Ishmael ? Where is that mercy and kindness which have providentially and specially interposed, by a series of wondrous arrangements, too, to raise up a spiritual seed to Ishmael, and that from a

spiritual system which has connected with none of its doctrines, none of its rites, none of its institutions, one promise of salvation? nay, which, as far as it has prejudiced millions against the Christian religion, or shut it out by force from the countries they inhabit, has been the instrument of hiding that faith whereof cometh salvation from the knowledge and acceptance of its votaries? What kind of spiritual blessing is this? The dark cloud of judgment is dense and lowering enough; but we shall in vain look for one cheering prismatic ray, to indicate a covenant of deliverance from the impending storm.

The chapter on the analogy of Mahometanism with Popery stands upon much better ground than Mr. Forster's parallels between Mahometanism and Judaism.

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Other correspondencies of the two Antichrists are marked with equal truth and force, and leave us to look for their nearly simultaneous downfall. To say nothing of those special judgments which are denounced in the infallible word of God against both "the beast" and "the false prophet," even in the way of natural consequence the elements of their destruction as powers exercising a controlling influence among the nations, and opposing barriers to the spread of the pure Gospel, are gathering strength to complete that overthrow which has already made formidable progress. They oppose themselves to the growing intelligence and to the rising civil liberties of mankind; and by the force of that attachment to both, which is diffusing itself in society, they must be borne down.

The chapters on the influence of Mahometanism upon civil and social life, upon the arts, and the advancement of learning, are exceedingly interesting, and exhibit great power of condensation, and an acute mode of making the author's research available to his design; which is to show, that Mahometanism has acted an important providential part in accomplishing many of those useful results of which society is now reaping the advantage. We have no objection to this position, a little differently stated. Say that the Saracenic conquests, not Mahometanism, had those effects, and the

conclusion may be allowed. We are here, too, perfectly willing to allow the interposition of Providence, that brings much good out of events which, in other aspects and relations, are pure and unmingled evil. The superstitions of Egypt were favourable to art; the dispersion of the Jews was beneficial to commerce; Monkery tended to the preservation and revival of letters; Popish superstition encouraged painting, music, and architecture; the irruption of the fierce and wild tribes of the north led to the political equality and manliness which distinguish several modern nations. So the Saracens, planting themselves in the seats of art and elegance, caught the love of art, and had the genius to improve upon it. They had access, for the first time, to the knowledge of the Greeks; and the powerful empires which were built up by their conquests, their wealth, and the active genius of their educated classes, led to its successful cultivation, when the rest of Europe was yet unroused from the effects of the invasion of the northern barbarians. But we should be glad to know what all this had to do with Mahometanism as a system? or how it proves a Providence engaged to sanction and foster the religious institutions of the impostor, more than the other results we have named, and which were overruled by Providence for the benefit of different nations, connects that Providence directly with Paganism, with corrupted Judaism, with Popery, or with the Gothic superstition of our ancestors? This seems to be the grand mistake of the author: He confounds a providential overruling, with providential sanction and impulse; and argues, because the Saracens did good service to letters and science, that Mahometanism springs from the promises to Ishmael as a pledged and covenanted mercy to mankind. So far, however, in fact, are these good results to be attributed to Mahometanism as a religious system, that they may be easily traced to incidental causes. That Mahometanism has no natural tendency to awaken the intellect, and to lead to mental and civil improvement, the case of the Turks and Persians, of Morocco and Algiers, supplies pregnant instances. Mahometanism is as pure there, and has been so for ages, as among the Saracens; the Koran as much

read ; the Mahometan ritual as exactly performed ; the zeal and devotion of the people as great ; and yet the barbarians have resisted all improvement, and have remained stationary, or retrograde, amidst the rising intelligence, commerce, arts, and science of the world. Admirable, therefore, as these chapters of the Inquiry are, in many respects, so far as they are connected with the general argument of the work they are wholly imaginative, and fallaciously ingenious.

The favourite notion of the author, that Mahometanism was designed to act a great part in preparing the world for the universal triumphs of Christianity, and has actually fulfilled, or is fulfilling, this high vocation, is the last point to which we shall address our remarks. In his first volume, he quotes, with approbation, a very objectionable passage from Professor White ; who remarks that,—

“ Doubts have arisen with sensible men, how far the propagation of the Gospel in some countries be, upon the whole, practicable or desirable ; whether the doctrines of it would not be imperfectly understood, or grossly misconceived, or professed to no good purpose ; whether as Gentilism and Judaism infected Christianity, so the favourite and inveterate superstitions of the American idolaters would not soon debase its purity, and counteract its efficacy. But this objection does not reach with its full force to the Mahometans of the east, who are lifted far above the ignorance of barbarians, and the ferocity of savages ; and a wider scope surely would be here given for instructing them successfully in the sublimer doctrines of Christianity. The savage, whose gloomy and confined theology was, perhaps, the growth of turbulent passion and wild fancy, might easily be persuaded to admit the existence of miracles ; from the similitude they bear to the supposed interpositions of his deities ; from his incapacity to ascertain the force of natural causes ; and from a kind of instinctive propensity to believe in those which are extraordinary. But the Mahometans, while they admit the principle of miracles, might be made more distinctly to conceive, and more readily to embrace, the argument from prophecy, in all its nice dependencies, and gradual evolutions. Among them



we are not to contend with the boisterous tempers and stubborn habits which characterize the human species in a state of barbarism ; we should find them already a race of men and citizens, who, by an easy transition, might pass to a full belief of the doctrines of Christianity. For the propagation of the Gospel in the east many inducements and advantages are held out to us, which the savage condition of the Indians of America does not afford. The Mahometans are an immense body of men, natives of populous and mighty empires, greatly exceeding in population the kingdoms of Christendom, and almost entirely occupying one quarter of the habitable globe. They are the subjects of regulated states ; they are the observers of established laws ; civilized by the intercourse of agriculture and commerce, and polished by the use of letters and of arts. They are neither involved in the impiety of Atheism, nor the darkness of idolatry ; and their religion, false as it is, has many articles of belief in common with our own ; which will facilitate our labours in diffusing the true faith, and dispose them to receive it. They believe in one God, Creator and Lord of all ; to whom they attribute infinite power, justice, and mercy. They hold the immortality of the soul ; and expect a future judgment, a heaven, and a hell ; they acknowledge an universal deluge ; they honour the Patriarch Abraham as the first author of their religion ; they acknowledge Moses and Christ to have been great Prophets, and allow the Pentateuch and the Gospel to be sacred books. Since, therefore, by our holy Scriptures, the duty of attempting the universal conversion of mankind is amply ascertained ; and since we find among the followers of Mahomet such favourable prepossessions and established doctrines, as will render easy the approach to their conversion, neither force of obligation, nor prospect of success, is wanting, to encourage our progress, and animate our zeal." (Vol. I., pages 105—108.)

To this Mr. Forster subjoins :—

“ In the joint operation, therefore, of Christianity and Mahometanism, there exists, in point of fact, a twofold instrumentality, acting co-ordinately upon a vast scale, on the civil

and social relations of mankind, and on their moral and spiritual interests and affections ; and apparently tending, in an eminent degree, to bring about that consummation spoken of in Scripture prophecy, when the one true religion shall universally prevail, and ‘the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.’ Christianity operates directly in the fulfilment of this prophecy ; Mahometanism shapes the course of things indirectly towards it. Both systems aim alike at the destruction of idolatry ; the one, by the introduction and establishment of true religion ; the other, by the introduction and establishment of a wonderful approximation to the true faith. Their influence is already universally diffused ; ‘their sound is gone out into all lands, their words unto the ends of the world ;’ and they hold so many great fundamentals in common, that, in the judgment of the most unexceptionable authorities, they contain a natural and necessary tendency to convergence ; the imperfect scheme, when its providential work shall have been accomplished, becoming absorbed in the perfect, and the moon of Mahomet resigning its borrowed rays, to melt in the undivided light of the everlasting Gospel.” (Vol. I., pages 108, 109.)

We take the sentiments both of Dr. White and Mr. Forster to be as opposed to the just reason of the case, as they are contrary to all the facts by which we are able to test them. It is beyond a doubt, that Mahometanism has never yet appeared to operate as a preparation for the Gospel. The proud bigotry which it infuses, and its favourable aspect upon vice and sensuality, have, on the contrary, enabled it to raise impenetrable barriers against the success of evangelical truth. Many more converts have been made from idolatry in India, than from the religion of the prophet. In Africa, the pagan negroes have been brought, in considerable numbers, to understand and to receive the Gospel ; whilst the Mahometan negro is as much out of the reach of conviction as the Mahometan Turk. And who feels not assured, that the spirit, life, and labours of Martyn, in Persia, and of the excellent Missionaries who have been settled in Palestine, would have been productive of much better results in almost any part of the

pagan world? If partial civilization, too, produces an easier transition to a full belief of the doctrines of Christianity, how is it that the pagan Africans, and the idolatrous inhabitants of the South Seas, have yielded a harvest in greater proportion than one thousand to one, in comparison of the far more highly civilized Pagans of Asia? Equally crude and unfounded is the notion, that the doctrines of Mahomet “facilitate our labours in diffusing the true faith, and dispose his disciples to receive it.” Did it never occur to either of these two Theologians, that the divine unity of the Mahometans is essentially a different doctrine from a unity which admits a trinity of Persons? and that the philosophic audacity which brings the case at once to the bar of human reason is a more formidable obstacle to cope with than the credulity of a Pagan? that a system of pharisaic pride, which rejects the doctrine of atonement, is far less likely to be subdued into humility, than the acknowledged sinfulness of a Heathen, who, though he trusts, indeed, in false propitiations, does not plead his own virtues? and that, as to the indulgence which is held out to sensuality, Mahometanism and Paganism stand pretty much upon the same level, and take an equal hold upon what is corrupt in man, and darken his judgment in proportion as they engage his passions in their favour? It is almost horrifying, truly, to hear grave and learned Divines associating Christianity and Mahometanism, “as a twofold instrumentality,” set to work by the same Providence, and “acting co-ordinately upon a vast scale, on the civil and social relations of mankind, and on their spiritual interests and affections.” There is, however, this relief, that the men who talk in this way know little of Christianity, except in its letter and in its externals. Of its real spirit, nay, of its vital doctrines,—of all that gives life to the soul dead in sin, peace to the conscience through faith in Christ, and regeneration to the heart,—their knowledge and estimate are so deficient, that we are the less surprised that they should find points of parallel in things so opposite, and speak of “the natural and necessary tendency of each system to convergence.”

We close our notice of these volumes by briefly remarking,

that the theory which they are designed to support is profane ; the reasonings by which it is sustained, feeble ; and the scriptural criticism, contemptible. The parallels designed to mark the co-ordinate arrangement of each religion are often ingeniously fanciful ; but might be applied, in many particulars, to various forms of Paganism, and especially to Popery, as well as to the religion of Mahomet, with its historical developments. The value of the work simply consists in the research to which zeal for a mischievous and false hypothesis has given rise. It has collected materials which may be used to better purpose.

## REVIEW XVII.

- An Introductory Lecture delivered in the University of London, on Friday, Oct. 24th, 1828. By the Rev. Thomas Dale, M.A., of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Professor of the English Language and Literature. 8vo. Pp. 32.*
- An Introductory Lecture delivered in the University of London, on Thursday, Oct. 2d, 1828. By John Conolly, M.D., Professor of the Nature and Treatment of Diseases. 8vo. Pp. 34.*
- An Essay on the Study of the Animal Kingdom. Being an Introductory Lecture delivered in the University of London, on the 23d of Oct., 1828. By Robert E. Grant, M.D., Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Zoology in the University of London. 8vo. Pp. 35.*
- An Introductory Lecture delivered in the University of London, on Tuesday, Nov. 11th, 1828. By Hyman Hurwitz, Professor of the Hebrew Language and Literature. 8vo. Pp. 32.*
- A Discourse on the Advantages of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy, as part of a General and Professional Education. Being an Introductory Lecture delivered in the University of London on the 28th of Oct., 1828. By the Rev. Dionysius Lardner, LL.D., F.R.S. L. and E., Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy in the University of London, &c., &c. 8vo. Pp. 36.*
- An Introductory Lecture delivered in the University of London, on Saturday, Nov. 15th, 1828. By Don Antonio Alcalá Galiano, Professor of the Spanish Language and Literature. 8vo. Pp. 33.*
- An Introductory Lecture delivered in the University of London, on Thursday, Oct. 30th, 1828. By Ludwig Von Mühlensfels, LL.D., Professor of the German and Northern Languages and Literature. 8vo. Pp. 27.*

THE University of London was not commenced without exciting controversy from very different quarters. Piety looked at this attempt at affording a professional education without any reference to the inculcation of religious opinions, as somewhat dangerous; prejudice poured contempt upon an institution which professed rivalry to our national Universities; and political suspicion was awakened by the aspect of liberalism with which it at first presented itself. Into this

controversy we shall not particularly enter. The institution has commenced with vigour, and promises to exert no minor influence upon the public mind ; and were we to say that we rejoice in its hopeful prospects, we should feel obliged to add some qualifications.

That the national Universities had become inadequate to the demands for a more ample supply of the means of a complete education to the higher classes of society, and to those destined for the professions, by a country advancing in population, refinement, and opulence, cannot be doubted. Equally certain it is, that a considerable portion of our youth were placed in the alternative of either renouncing the advantages of the English Universities, or of violating their honesty, and that of their friends, by being compelled to undergo religious tests ; and thus no other resource was left than to seek such an education as their rank and prospects in life require, at an inconvenient distance, and, in some respects, in an imperfect form. This was a case which we think had become imperative upon the State to take into its serious consideration, and to provide for in the liberal spirit of the age. This might have been done by the erection of new colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, in which, whilst the orthodox principles of the established religion might have had as great a share of influence and inculcation as they have at present, the tests and subscriptions might have been removed ; or a new central University might have been established, guarded, as to its religious character, by the Tutors and Professors being of the established Church, or agreeing with it in leading doctrinal principles ; whilst the students might have been exonerated from all bars upon their matriculation, or their access to literary honours, arising from the profession of religious tenets, or their connexion with the sects. Education would, indeed, then have always assumed the truth of the general doctrinal tenets of the Church of England ; these, on many occasions, would have been incidentally put forth, or directly taught, and every thing contrary to them excluded ; but if they had been free from religious intolerance in other matters, the orthodox Dissenters, at least, would have had no reason to

complain ; and no objection would have been heard from those parents whose sons are now, for the sake of convenience chiefly, or from greater facility of admission, and more economical expenditure, sent to the London University. The heterodox Dissenters, and the very few Free-Thinkers who care any thing about the religious principles with which the education of their sons may be connected, would have been the only persons left to feel the exclusion ; and to their objections little weight would or ought to have been attached.

We think that Government, and the dignitaries of the Establishment, suffered a fine opportunity of doing a public good, and of preventing no inconsiderable share of evil, to escape them, from their slowness, their indifference, or their prejudices. On them, we fear, the first and great fault is chargeable. The next was in the orthodox sects themselves, and the more liberal members of the established Church. A new University was desirable and necessary ; since those who ought to have been first to notice the nation's wants, and to provide for them, in this respect were indifferent. But to adopt the principle of entirely excluding religion from education, and of imposing upon all Tutors, Professors, and Lecturers a total silence on religious subjects, or such a mode of speaking upon them when introduced, as shall offend no class of believers, semi-believers, or unbelievers, was to take a step not imposed by the necessity of the case, and from which all that positive evil which results from the absence of good, will, we fear, ensue.

Such a recognition of the leading principles of true Christianity might have been carried by the zealous, united, and firm exertions of the orthodox of different parties, as would have prevented the charge of indifference to religion, guaranteed the supply of Professors of unobjectionable religious principles, and released them from the miserable thralldom of weighing, with timid caution, all their allusions to religious subjects, lest they should offend against the liberalism upon which the London University is now founded. There are some branches of knowledge which cannot be taught but with a bearing upon Christianity, and often in its most essential

points. A teacher of right views and principles, even when he is not directly teaching religion, but some branch of general knowledge, offers this advantage, that he holds science and literature at least in harmony with the religious principles of the youth he initiates ; principles sacred, doubtless, to the majority of the parents of whose sons he has the charge. He may strengthen what is good in their opinions ; or, at least, exclude every thing of evil influence. A free-thinking Professor, received as such, in any institution, can as little keep his peculiar views, or general scepticism, out of sight ; with this advantage on his part, that if his innuendoes were complained of, he would be encouraged to set up in his defence the captious cry of illiberality. In a system of this liberal character, we hold that what the majority of its supporters believe to be truth has not an equal chance with what they believe to be deep and deadly error ; and the orthodox supporters of this University appear to us to have exposed their youth to danger on the one hand, without having an adequate counteraction and guard on the other. They might have taken much higher ground, without departing from any thing that deserves, in fact and sobriety, to be called liberal. They would have lost some of their shareholders and patrons. The zealous Socinians and Free-Thinkers would have turned aside from the project : But they would have gained other and better friends ; whilst men of bad or equivocal principles might have set up some more liberal institution of their own ; which, under its proper colours, could have deceived no one.

The supporters of the London University have, by the stress of controversy on these obvious principles, been led to attempt to supply this want of religious instruction and influence, by setting up sermons and lectures out of College ; attendance on which is, however, voluntary, and will, we predict, be very scanty. But this by no means supplies the great desideratum in education. In the national Universities, we think that the religion taught is too partial, too sectarian, and too little Christian ; and that every youth who passes through his course should be made to understand, by means of elementary books, lectures, and examinations, the nature



and evidences of that religion which he is to profess in society : Whereas, few indeed, except those who have had the advantage of careful instruction under the parental roof, or those who are designed for orders, know so much on this momentous subject, as the boys taught on the excellent system of Dr. Bell ; no, nor one-tenth of what is thus taught to the children of the poor. A new University, established by well-minded Churchmen, without bigotry, and by the orthodox sects, had an opportunity of supplying this defect, and of setting a fine example even to Oxford and Cambridge. A set of books, furnished by the learning and piety of Divines of the Establishment and of the sects, might easily have been selected from those which are now read and admired by all sound Christians, as the text-books of such a course of religious tuition, occupying its proper place with other branches of science and literature ; whilst the peculiarities of non-essential opinions might have been avoided. But the professed believers in the great doctrines of the Scriptures, as held by all the Reformed Churches in the purest times, which are still held by the majority of them, appear to us to have yielded, in a very spiritless manner, to the plausible pretences of a mischievous liberalism ; and to have consented, in an evil hour, to throw their religion into holes and corners.

To this it is no answer to say, that parents may teach what they please at home ; and may compel the attendance of their sons at approved religious lectures. The fact is, that what is made incidental and secondary to education will be but very partially and inefficiently attended to ; and, were it otherwise, our objection still is, that the principles and doctrines of the holy Scriptures are so shut out by this misnamed “ liberal principle,” from mingling themselves with all those branches of knowledge which are most intimately related to them, that the advantage which each derives reciprocally from the other, is lost ; and that an opportunity is given to place literature and science, by insidious sophistry, partial statement, or ignorant temerity, against religion itself. In our judgment, it is as impossible to separate some branches of necessary knowledge from religion, as it is received by orthodox believers, as

to untwist the light and heat of the sunbeam ; and every such attempt will leave the knowledge partial, misleading, and, to all good purpose, emasculate.

The thing is, however, done ; and the only means of rendering it as innocuous as possible is, for the more cautious part of the managers to guard the appointment of the Professors, so as to exclude, at least in those departments where mischief may arise, the introduction of men of sceptical or equivocal principles. But even when the Professors are men of known and approved opinions, as to Christian doctrine, the silence imposed upon them, or the barren generalities to which they are driven by this religious liberalism, are truly pitiable. Seven of the Introductory Lectures, of the Professors already appointed, are mentioned at the head of this article. We notice especially that of the Professor of the English language and literature, because he is a Clergyman of the established Church ; and also because of the following passage : “ All his colleagues with whom he has the advantage of being acquainted heartily concur, that mental culture should be connected with moral instruction, and both enlisted in the service of religion.” Similar sentiments occur in the Lecture itself, and in some others of these introductory addresses ; and thus an effort is made in them to impress the notion, that morals and religion are viewed as matters of great importance by the founders of the University, and by the Professors. This is pushed so far by the Professor of the English language, the Rev. Thomas Dale, that it seems to us to take the shape of an apology for himself, as a Clergyman, holding a Professorship in a University, concerning which, he tells us, “ The leading principle in this liberal institution is, that scientific and literary pursuits have no connexion whatever with the religious persuasion of any individual.” (Page 31.) This effort to convey the impression, that the inculcation of moral and religious sentiment is not inconsistent with this “ leading principle ” is some homage paid to the public feeling on this subject, and seems intended to act as a sedative upon the controversy, until an experiment of so novel a kind has been tried. The present Professors, too, for the most part, appear

unobjectionable; and, perhaps, really wish to convey good instruction on these subjects “incidentally;” and these vowels may be made to satisfy their consciences. But then, if the “leading principle,” already specified, is to be maintained, we really cannot see how either morals or religion are to be inculcated even in an incidental manner; and not wholly be resigned to those lectures which form no part of the course, which are given out of the University, and which no one is required to attend. The “leading principle” is, “that scientific and literary pursuits have no connexion whatever with the religious persuasion of any individual.” If, therefore, the inculcation of morals and religion is to come “incidentally” into the lectures, they must be inculcated upon principles with which every religious persuasion accords; which might be very well if all the persuasions recognised were orthodox; for then some effective common principles on which to build religion and morals might be found; but when the persuasions are so extended as to embrace Socinians, Materialists, Free-thinking Christians, Sceptics, Jews, and Deists,—all and every form of error that has ever worked itself up into a system of tenets,—the task is manifestly more difficult to find this common ground; and when it is found, we fear, it will be mere bog, and not rock. What are to be the morals, and what is to be the religion, thus “incidentally” to be inculcated, but morals without authority, and religion without doctrine? And for this reason we greatly prefer those of the Lecturers who go through their subject without any reference to morals and religion at all, to those apparently more serious men who, entangled between the “leading principle” and their sense of duty, are constrained to place both morals and religion on a ground at once deceptive and insufficient.

Mr. Dale seems to have been pressed in spirit to give us a specimen, in his introductory lecture, of the manner in which he intends to discharge this part of his duty; (rather extra-official, we think, as a lecturer in a University so constituted;) and we shall therefore examine it. He first promises, that in the extracts which he shall give from successive authors, in

exemplification of the progress of the English language, he will exclude all that have an impure or otherwise immoral tendency. This is expected, of course; for less than this would not be required by public decorum from an itinerant Lecturer on elocution, exhibiting his talents at recitation before a mixed assembly. We are therefore carried a step higher. Mr. Dale says,—

“I reiterate my full conviction, that in thus combining the moral instruction with the mental improvement of the students, I shall act in accordance with the great principle which influences the directors and supporters of this noble establishment. Their object is indeed to accelerate the ‘march of intellect,’ a phrase now scarcely preserved by its expressiveness from degenerating into mere cant, and for which I would prefer to substitute the ‘progress of knowledge.’ But they know that the march of intellect, or the progress of knowledge, call it which you may, will never be retarded because virtue and religion accompany her on either side. They see that knowledge and virtue derive a lustre from religion, which she cannot derive from them; for if knowledge be excellent, and virtue admirable, religion is divine.” (Page 31.)

The mention of religion, however, requires explanation; and this follows :—

“Gentlemen, in thus introducing the sacred name of religion to an assemblage like the present, where various, and perhaps conflicting, opinions are entertained by many on this most important of all subjects, I feel that I have ventured upon difficult ground. Let me not, however, be suspected of affixing an exclusive meaning to the word. Firmly attached, from examination and reflection, to that form of Christianity which is the established religion of the state, I yet disclaim from my heart the most distant intention of interfering with the sacred right of private judgment, or of compromising, in any degree, the leading principle of this truly liberal institution,—that scientific and literary pursuits have no connexion whatever with the religious persuasion of any individual. While, therefore, I announce, with unfeigned gratification, that the munificence of noble and distinguished individuals connected

with the University has provided the means of religious instruction for students of the Church of England,—a means which it shall be my care to make effectual,—not to such alone will the moral lessons which may incidentally be conveyed in these lectures be adapted. There I shall make no distinction, for there will I know no difference ; and if there are any to whose peculiar opinions violence will be offered, those only are the persons who discard from their system, whatever it be, the practical influence of moral principles, and who, in the cultivation of the intellect, the most valuable endowment of our nature, have no higher or nobler aim than to advance their sordid interest, and minister to their sensual enjoyment ; regardless alike of the happiness of their connexions, the welfare of society, their own true dignity, or the honour of their God.' (Pages 31, 32.)

Thus, then, we learn, that the religion to be “ incidentally conveyed ” has no “ exclusive meaning ” attached to it. It means, not that which is received as such by the orthodox Churchman or sectarian, but such as Socinians, Free-thinkers, Deists, and Jews can all agree in ; for Mr. Dale disclaims, from his heart, “ the most distant intention of interfering with the sacred right of private judgment, or of compromising, in any degree, the leading principle of this truly liberal institution.” Now, we ask, if Mr. Dale should be ingenious enough to discover that accommodating system of religion, in which the principles of all these “ persuasions ” compel them to agree, whether, with those views of religion which he has as a Churchman, he can bring himself to believe, that in teaching this he is inculcating religion ? It cannot be ; and therefore it is not only absurd, but really mischievous and delusive, to attempt it. The same observation may be made on morals. No violence on this subject will be offered to the “ peculiar opinions ” of any, but those “ who discard from their system, whatever it be, the practical influence of moral principles ; ” that is, if the passage mean any thing at all, those who reject moral principles entirely. For the rest, then, he will have to do with some who believe that morality has its authority in the appointment of God, and others who refer it to the mere will of

man, with those who connect morals with revelation, and those who trace them only to reason; with those who think themselves bound by the whole will of God, and those who think they have a right to reject, modify, and arrange moral duties according to their own theory of fitness; with those who support morality on the belief of a future state of retribution, and those who disbelieve that state altogether. Very general, very vague, and very powerless, we fear, will be Mr. Dale's inculcation of morals, by "incidental suggestion;" and very much on a par with his accommodated religion.

Dr. Conolly, too, the Professor of the nature and treatment of diseases, in his very sensible introductory lecture, appears rather anxious, like Mr. Dale, to show that the "leading principle" will yet allow the Professors to do some little, at least, in the service of morals and religion; for we find this passage in his lecture:—

"God forbid, gentlemen, that I should be supposed for a moment capable of joining in any hypocritical and odious cry, in which the sacred name of religion is employed to promote political ends and worldly interests, to justify persecution, and to excite the worst passions of men! But there is a religion which makes men better." (Page 31.)

Very good; but, alas! the "leading principle of this liberal institution" prevents Dr. Conolly, and every one else, from going beyond this hint. Should any one ask what religion this is, there must be silence; or else the inquirer must be sent to Mr. Dale, for the religion which agrees with the "persuasion of any individual" among them. Dr. Conolly also properly recommends the students to lay aside their professional pursuits "on Sunday;" and further exhorts,—

"Attend the services of religion. Examine how you are passing your time. Review and regulate your thoughts; and clear your minds of any animosities or discomposures which may have arisen during the week. Let the remainder of the day be passed in the perusal of esteemed authors, or in the society of wise and good associates. You will then not only not lose a day, but will actually gain time, by the refreshment of your minds; and by the acquisition of that serenity, the

want of which is most unfavourable to mental exertion, and which is never enjoyed except when we are quite at peace with ourselves." (Pages 31, 32.)

First, the services of religion are to be attended, but for what end is not stated. Then the mind is to be cleared "from animosities and discomposures,"—but how? This the "leading principle" forbids the Professor to answer. Then, "esteemed authors" are to be read. We suppose he did not mean "good books," in the generally received meaning, but literature in general. And, finally, the end of this Sunday observance is not to obtain peace with God, the strength of his grace, and a meetness for death and our final account,—for these topics would have offended greatly against the "leading principle,"—but "the acquisition of that serenity which is favourable to mental exertion;" which is pretty much as if he had simply said, "Turn your thoughts on the Sunday into other channels than those of your week-day studies, and your minds will be refreshed; and thus you will attend the lectures of the week to better advantage. Be good boys, and mind your books."

Now, instead of this "incidental" conveyance of moral and religious instruction, rebutting the objection which has arisen, as to the exclusion of religion, it leaves it in greater force. So far are such cautious and unmeaning generalities on the subject, introduced with an apology, and succumbing to the "leading principle" at every step, from being any commendation of the system, they are decidedly reprehensible, and make the matter worse. We prefer, indeed, greatly, the absolute observance of the "leading principle" by the Professors; because, when no pretence is set up, incidentally inculcating religion by some, there can be the less cover for the insinuating irreligion by others; and all serious parents, knowing that nothing absolutely but dry science and literature are to be taught, may be induced to provide for religion and morals in some efficient way. We approve, therefore, more of those introductory lectures which confine themselves wholly to their subjects, without any of these incidental attempts to teach what, in fact, the "leading principle" of the institution

forbids them to teach, and which renders the very attempt often worse than absurd. We do this for the same reason, that we had rather a medical man should abstain wholly from a patient who needs effective medicine, than give him mere slop, corked up in a labelled phial, having the delusive appearance of some healing potion ; but which, though innoxious itself, only delays or prevents the administration of the necessary remedy.

As to the Introductory Lectures themselves, placed at the head of this article, their chief interest lies in their containing sketches of the course which each Professor is to pursue, and of his general arrangement. They rather tell us what is to be communicated, than afford any satisfactory information on the sciences to which they relate. Dr. Grant's Introductory Discourse defines the objects and limits of comparative anatomy, comparative physiology, and zoology ; and contains a rapid and able sketch of the extent and distribution of the animal kingdom, and the connexion of the study of animals with other branches of science. Dr. Conolly, after a slight sketch of the history of medicine, chiefly explains the objects to which he shall direct his course of lectures ; and gives general and very good professional advices to the students. Dr. Lardner's lecture is an outline of natural philosophy and astronomy ; and demonstrates the great importance of these sciences as part of a general and professional education. He states, that such is the distance of some of the stars with which we are acquainted, that light emanating from them could not reach the earth in less than fifteen thousand years ; hence he concludes that they must have been in existence, at least, during that period. If such stars exist, of course they are either not included in the Mosaic account of the creation, or the chronology of the Bible is erroneous ; but into these questions the Doctor does not enter. In his very eloquent lecture, however, he directs the attention of the students to the great First Cause of all things, distinctly recognises his superintending Providence, and declares that all the analogies of nature are in direct opposition to the doctrine of materialism. This lecture is illustrated by engravings. The principal excellence



of Mr. Dale's lecture lies in the history he gives of the English language ; which, if it contain nothing new, has been selected from other authors with judgment, and is very well condensed.

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We are glad to see that the principles and practice of English composition are to be taught in an unaffected English style ; for in Mr. Dale we see nothing of the stiff verbiage so prevalent in the present day. Some of his metaphors, however, are far-fetched. The force of this ornament of speech lies in the ideal similitude being at once perceived ; and in its so illustrating the thought, as to give to it a vigour which it would not possess if only nakedly stated. When these circumstances do not meet, metaphors are rather artificial flowers pricked into a barren soil, than the natural efflorescence thrown out by a rich one. The simile in the beginning of the extract just given, is appropriate and illustrative ; and, although it has been often used, is here very well expressed ; but to compare a language, in any state, to “the new insect stirring its wings before it has shaken off its aurelia state,” could only be allowed, were it appropriate to compare the language in its perfect state to a full-formed insect ; which would not be very complimentary, at least to our own. Mr. Dale prefers, afterwards, to compare it, on its entrance into this mature state, to “an eagle, soaring upwards in the fearlessness of new-born vigour ;” in which we defy any man to find a resemblance. Thoughts may soar, but not mere words ; and we hope that he will teach his students, that eloquence lies more in thought than in speech ; and that the latter is worth nothing, but as it enunciates the former.

The Professor of the Hebrew language and literature, Mr. Hurwitz, is a learned Jew, already known by his writings ; and his Introductory Lecture will be read with interest, as the result of a cultivated mind. There was, indeed, no literary reason for the appointment of a Jew to the Hebrew Professorship. Since the revival of the study of the Hebrew language, that tongue has been more critically examined, and, consequently, better understood, by many Christian scholars in

Europe, than by the most learned of the Jews anywhere. They have been better fitted for the study by their more enlarged acquaintance with oriental languages, and by that mental discipline which produces sobriety and accuracy of judgment. It was a Christian who first gave the true key to the peculiar structure of Hebrew poetry in modern times ; and the principles on which he developed it, we perceive, are admitted by Mr. Hurwitz, and probably by all Jews of learning. As Jewish students were very properly to be admitted to the University, we suppose it was thought fit to have a Jewish Hebrew Professor ; which we, however, do not think was either necessary or advisable ; since it was not the knowledge of Hebrew that the Jewish youth needed, but science, and general literature ; and because the interpretation of Hebrew, on Jewish principles, may very easily mislead the Christian student by its Rabbinical taint. We must, however, greatly commend Mr. Hurwitz's respect for the "leading principle," already adverted to, which he seems much better to understand than either Mr. Dale or Dr. Conolly. A Christian Hebraist would, indeed, have been a much worse Hebrew Professor for this "principle ;" and the Jew Professor will be rendered more innoxious. Yet we see not why Mr. Hurwitz had not as much right "incidentally" to convey something on morals and religion as the other Professors ; and as they ventured to give a few slight touches of Christianity, he might have given in his lecture a slight touch of Judaism,—just a hint or two at the Jewish morality of polygamy and divorce, for instance, and of the unrepealed authority of the Mosaic institute. He has acted more frankly ; and since he cannot teach Judaism fully, he has determined to confine himself to dry Hebrew grammar, and the literary criticism of the language. In his own "individual character," and "in a proper time and place," he would prove the divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures ; but "at present, and in this place," he observes, "I appear as a grammarian and philologist." He is forbidden to touch upon "typical senses," and confines himself to the "literal." This is all well, if he keep to the rule, because it proceeds

upon just views of consistency. One cannot, however, help contrasting the advantages which the Christian student will derive from the lectures of this prudent Jew, with those he would have received from an unfettered and learned Christian Professor of the literature of the same sacred volume.

The lectures of Professors Galiano and Mühlenfels contain an able sketch of the history and peculiarities of the Spanish and German languages, and of the manner in which it is intended to teach them.

## REVIEW XVIII.

*The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; in which are included, the Life of his Brother, the Rev. Charles Wesley, A.M., Student of Christ Church, and Memoirs of their Family; comprehending an Account of the great Revival of Religion, in which they were the first and chief Instruments. By the Rev. Henry Moore, only surviving Trustee of Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts. 8vo. Vol. I. London, 1824. Pp. 571.*

BIOGRAPHY is made a difficult task, equally by the superabundance and by the poverty of incidents; by the greatness which raises the subject much above the level of his fellows, or the littleness which sinks him below them; by the total absence of public interest in an obscure character, and when that interest diffuses itself through large masses of men of different and even opposing views, prejudices, and feelings. The many Lives which have been written of Mr. Wesley, and the many failures of which they are the monuments, are in proof, that a character of the utmost simplicity in itself may be difficult to develope; and that the incidents of a clear and active life, spent in the full view of a nation, and subject to continual observation, though easy to narrate, may become very entangling to biographers, whose duty it is, to trace the course of action to its principles, and to display its immediate and probable remote effects.

That at this period a new Life of the venerable Founder of Methodism should be considered necessary, not by the author himself, but by serious people in general; that the readers of all former performances should still feel, that what has been done well has not been done fully, and that much has been done which it is desirable to undo; is a sufficient comment upon the mass of biography which has, at unequal intervals, been accumulated upon the memory of that extraordinary man, who has been the subject of so much and so

various criticism. Hitherto, we may say without hesitation, Mr. Wesley has been unfortunate in these records of his labours and his character. His respectable co-biographers, the late Dr. Coke, and the writer of the present volume, were dishonourably deprived of a large portion of valuable papers, essential to the completeness of their undertaking ; while the prospect of a rival and unfriendly work hastened a publication which more time would have improved. Dr. Whitehead's attempt commenced under the influence of a weakened principle of honour, which, in no small degree, desecrated the writer for the work he had undertaken ; whilst private pique led him, in his account of the two illustrious brothers, unawed by the charity which had inseparably linked their hearts amidst all their differences of opinion, to attempt to exalt the one at the expense of the other ; and to abstract virtues from the elder to pile upon the younger ; in order to make the disproportion striking, and to give a sanction to those prejudices of his hero which he thought proper to turn to his own account in avenging his quarrel with a part of the Preachers. The spirit of party kept this work alive for the time ; but it may be considered as long since dead. Mr. Hampson's *Life of Wesley* has, for many years, been rarely seen, except in public libraries, where it has been consulted by all those writers who thought it proper to break a lance with Methodism, and to develope its origin by tracing it to the cunning and ambition of its Founder. He was one of those who, as Mr. Southey has justly observed, "wanted the heart" to do justice to Mr. Wesley's worth ; and seems to have written principally to clear himself of the suspicion of any remaining taint of Methodism. Mr. Southey's *Life of Wesley* differs from all its predecessors. To him Mr. Wesley was a distant object, and his acquaintance with him accidental, or, as we may more properly term it, literary. He had been always out of the reach of the influence of those party currents, which every great system must produce in its efforts to throw off the waves with which it is assailed, when, like an island forming in a surrounding ocean, it is grounding its foundations, and spreading its surface for the production of the plant and the

forest. From direct party feeling, therefore, his work is free. He found Mr. Wesley as he found the heroes and heroines of his epics,—his Madoc, his Joan of Arc, and his Roderic,—in his solitary reading ; and pounced upon him as fair literary game. We do Mr. Southey the justice to say, that the faults in his Life of Wesley are not generally those which arise from the want of fairness and candour ; and there is this obvious contrast between him and Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Hampson, that they erred not for want of principle, but for want of temper ; Mr. Southey, not from deficiency of temper, but of principles. His mistakes are neither to be traced to ecclesiastical prejudice nor sectarian partisanship ; they are the mistakes of a man who had still to be inducted into the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, of a man “ not spiritual,” sitting in judgment upon spiritual things and a spiritual man. It is, indeed, in some views, amusing to notice the alleged faults, for which Mr. Wesley is vituperated by former biographers, converted into splendid qualities in the pages of Mr. Southey. The wisdom of his “ plans ” is a display of gigantic intellect ; his “ ambition ” is the moral force of a great character. The phenomena presented by the character, and labours, and successes of Mr. Wesley appeared, indeed, so extraordinary to Mr. Southey, as to throw his philosophy into her deepest musings, to frame a theory by which they might be accounted for ; and, that discovered, the tale is adduced in illustration of the principles, with evident general admiration of his hero, with great sprightliness of style, and with perfect good temper.

Mr. Southey went to philosophy, when he ought to have gone to theology. There was the source of his failure as the biographer of Mr. Wesley. He sins less against him personally, than against all the principles of evangelical truth, acknowledged by enlightened Christians of every name. His book is, on this account, dangerous to the young and the incautious. By others, the narrative may still be safely read, and will always be read with interest ; and even the philosophy will, to them, afford another instructive proof that, as to the wise of this world, “ the least in the kingdom of God is

greater than he," in the solution of all religious and moral problems ; and that there are things which God "hath hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes."

Mr. Southey had not even the elements of theological science ; and he attempted to write the Life of the most eminent Preacher of repentance, faith, and regeneration, who has appeared in modern times, without ever seeming to have thought it necessary to attain distinct notions of any of those essential parts of practical religion, either from the holy Scriptures, or from the Church of which he now professes himself a member. It was an enterprise, therefore, as hopeless as it was absurd ; and could only be equalled by an attempt to write the philosophic Life, and to estimate the discoveries, of Sir Isaac Newton, by a person wholly ignorant of the mathematics ; or to propose a digest of the discoveries of modern chemistry, by one who never made an experiment, and could attach no definite idea to the very elementary terms of chemical science.

A Life of Mr. Wesley was still a desideratum, after all that had been done, and after all the lights under which his character had been viewed ; and we know of no one so well fitted for this task, as the venerable and aged Minister who has undertaken it. Enough had surely been achieved by enemies and partial friends in this service ; and, as to the work of the Laureat, one attempt of the blind to investigate the philosophy of colours was amply sufficient. No one but the conscientious personal friend of Mr. Wesley could be equally qualified to develope his true character ; and the genius of Methodism, its exact system of doctrine, and the bearings of its discipline, could by none be so justly exhibited as by one who had lived through so many years of its history, and taken an active part in its exertions and struggles. That which was wanted as to Mr. Wesley and Methodism was, simply "to declare the thing as it is ;" and, thus explained, to leave it to the judgment of mankind. Those who wish to have the case before them, will gladly accept the exposition of Methodism from a Methodist ; those who will have it from

others, hear not the depositions of witnesses, but the pleadings of counsel.

The desideratum to which we have adverted, judging from the present volume, will be, we think, fully and very ably supplied by the completion of the work before us. The account of the life and labours of Mr. Wesley, found in the former work of Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, will be filled up and enlarged by the papers which were then unjustly withheld, and the authentic parts of narratives since published; several illustrative and characteristic anecdotes are found in the present volume, and the number will, we hope, be increased in that which is forthcoming; and the Life of Mr. Charles Wesley is embodied with that of his brother, by which the character and conduct of the latter receives much illustration, and which, from the circumstances of its only being found at large in a work written under party bias, and not with the best feeling,—a work also but little read of late years,—was, in reality, scarcely known to the modern race of Methodists themselves. Yet for a time were the labours of Mr. Charles Wesley as abundant and successful as those of his brother, who is more truly esteemed the Founder of Methodism, as a religious system: Few men, even in that age, equalled him in the power of his preaching, his ardour, and his noble defiance of persecution; and the body of Methodists are laid under an eternal debt of obligation to his memory, for the greater part of those incomparable Hymns which are used in their public and private services, and in which the whole of the Spirit's work in the heart is traced with a truth to which every heart responds, at every step of the Christian life; and with a simplicity and elegance of language, which have done more than any thing else to guard the true theological phrase of the Wesleyan Methodists from cant and affectation, and to impress upon it a nervous and honest dignity. The value of that part of the work which is devoted to Mr. Charles Wesley is enhanced by the entire candour with which all the views taken by that excellent man, and in which he differed both from his brother and the author, are stated. His memory is, throughout, treated with deserved reverence and affection.



A work like that before us scarcely admits of extracts ; both because it would be difficult to limit them if commenced, and because all the leading parts of Mr. Wesley's life are familiar to the great body of our readers ; and to those who are not acquainted with them, any one of them would require, in order to be fully understood, more preface and observation than our limits would allow. The life of such a man, extending through so many years, and presented in so many scenes of holy toil and apostolic triumph, is not to be sought in an abridged form in a review. Our business is rather to introduce the reader to the work, than the work to the reader. The remainder of this article will, therefore, be for the most part confined to such general observations as have suggested themselves by the perusal.

Notwithstanding the copious and interesting "Memoirs of the Wesley family," recently published by Dr. Clarke, the author has, we think, done well to prefix to his narrative a brief account of the ancestors and relations of Mr. Wesley. The work is thereby rendered more complete ; and, what is of more importance, the religious character of Mr. Wesley's relations is preserved in its true light, and with a steady hand. That family was an impressive example of the state of religious knowledge among the most excellent part of the members of the Church of England, before that great revival of evangelical truth, of which Mr. Wesley was the chief instrument. Calvinism and Dissent,—Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, and attachment to the Church,—were almost constantly associated ; the former had assumed too generally the disgusting feature of Antinomianism ; the latter, infused in different degrees into so many of the standard writings of the Church, subsequent to the Reformation, and very much connected with the notion of the efficacy of sacraments and ordinances in themselves, produced carelessness in the majority ; a strict and onerous Pharisaism in the formal ; and, in the best, darkened that clear view of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which has so eminent a place in the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of the Church itself. In the latter class, the Wesley family may be certainly placed ; but the record of their virtues,

without discriminating in this particular, would but serve to convey erroneous impressions. The stern, inflexible, and militant virtue of the father; the eminent excellence of the extraordinary mother, never to be mentioned without veneration; the respectable, influential, and generous character of the elder brother, must all be felt: But prejudice had made the father a stranger to the practical and experimental writings of the Puritan and Nonconformist school; and other society, and a new course of reading, had obscured, even in the well-informed and serious mind of Mrs. Wesley, the lessons of her education on the doctrine of justification. This occurred the more easily to her, as it will often occur to others, where that doctrine is theoretically held in any degree independent of the direct witness of the Spirit; and when the evidences of pardon, as is too often, but not always, the case, in the Calvinistic school, are made wholly or chiefly inferential, and when the blessing itself is not exhibited as an attainable present salvation. In such obscure views John and Charles were educated; and when, at Oxford, a deeper concern for their salvation was wrought in their minds, the system of Mr. Law fettered them with heavier chains; whose weight was increased by every effort at liberty, and which were riveted by every stroke of conviction. The whole family presents a picture of servants, excellent servants, indeed; but not “the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty;”—of “certain disciples;” but disciples baptized only into the baptism of John; and who, though they knew that the Messiah was come, had not so much as heard that any Holy Ghost was given. If Christianity, in its complete form, were at this stage found in the Wesley family, we know not what Mr. John Wesley learned from the Moravian Church, which in these points of experimental piety has preserved primitive Christianity with so much purity. What was not there, was brought into it by the goodness of God; it was first found by him who was most earnestly seeking that yet undefined blessing,—conscious pardon through simple faith; and the family at large were at different periods made partakers of “like precious faith,” and died among its witnesses. This is a point very clearly stated

and strongly guarded by Mr. Moore ; and he has done excellent service by his discrimination.

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A great part of the history of the subjects of these memoirs is given in extracts from their own journals and letters. This appears to us to be a leading excellence in the work ; for in no language so suitable as their own could their feelings have been embodied, and their labours detailed ; nor can a serious and candid person, of any religious body, we think, peruse the narrative without feeling how much the country at large is indebted to these distinguished instruments of awakening a sense of religion in a nation eminently “dead in trespasses and sins ;” and in which ignorance in the mass, and error in the intelligent, were rapidly destroying what little had survived of truth and conscience, the relics of a better age. It must be felt, too, in the perusal, how easy it is for flippant spirits of different parties, for men who have entered into a state of society made greatly what it is, in moral improvement, by the labours of those great men, to rail at or ridicule them and their coadjutors ; but how difficult it would be to imitate them. They belong truly to a loftier class, and must have been under a special call, and endowed with pre-eminent qualities, natural and moral, for such a work. They arrested the attention of Mr. Southey’s philosophy, and they not unfrequently warmed his poetic susceptibility into admiration ; though many a Minister of the Gospel, and many a religious partisan, whilst even professing to know the spiritual nature of Christianity, and to be zealous for the spread of truth and holiness, have regarded them with cold repulsiveness, hurled against them their unseemly but feeble sneer, and often refused to acknowledge the grace of God in them. And yet if there were in such men but a common respect to the capabilities of our common nature, when endued with the grace of the Holy Spirit ; a taste for what is strongly marked in character, and what is beautiful in an entire consecration of life and all its faculties to public ends, and to the glory of God ; they might have been shamed out of those paltry feelings which obstruct all that is noble and generous, in dis-

charging the debt of a common gratitude to such benefactors of mankind. If that moral elevation won so much admiration from Mr. Southey's semi-infidel Christianity, it might have been expected to produce some sentiment of veneration in those who professed a true Christianity itself.

As they, however, held on their way, without respect to the opinions they might create, so likewise does their posthumous character ; creating gratitude, at least, in those who have been made directly or indirectly the " seal of their apostleship ;" and exhibiting to future ages an example which can never be forgotten, and the influence of which can never finally perish. They started too boldly from the canvass for that result to be possible ; they filled too large a space in the public eye ; are bound up too intimately in the religious history of the eighteenth century ; they made too great an impression upon theological science ; they put into action too practical and energetic a system ; and they stand too provokingly in the way of the mere sectarian and the religious formalist ; their characters have too much attraction for the reverence of piety ; are too repelling to suffer indifference from infidel and worldly men ; and are, in a word, of that specific kind which can admit of no neutrality in life or in death, but must command friendship, or call out hostility. To such examples, the candid and renewed mind will always turn with interest, and derive from them a quickening ardour. The honest anxiety with which they taught the truth, and the decisive character of their conversion, are each in a high degree instructive. They found the liberty of the sons of God by faith alone, when in the closest gripe of legal bondage ; and yet relaxed no painful and self-denying duty afterwards, under pretence of spiritual freedom. They were taught, and then taught others, that the yoke of Christ is easy, not because it is broken, but because it is bound upon a spirit strengthened by faith, and made cheerful by filial love ; and they worked with the greater laboriousness and ardour, when they worked from life, and not, in the legal sense, for life. By them was most eminently exemplified the great Christian habit of " living unto the Lord : " They taught the whole body of Christians and Chris-

tian Preachers, that, in the former character, their only business in life was to save their own souls ; in the latter, to save the souls of others. The largeness of their charity, which poured itself forth in the tenderest sympathies for an ignorant and vicious land ; their affection for all of every name who bore the manifest image of Christ ; their steady intentness in disregarding every thing, “circumcision or uncircumcision,” but the “new creature” formed in the heart of man ; their constant regard for the Scriptures, as the only appeal in all matters which relate to the work of God in the heart, as well as in matters of doctrine ; the fearlessness with which they went to all well-established scriptural consequences ; the cheerful faith in which they enterprised all their efforts ; and the constancy of prayer with which they acknowledged God in all things ;—these were characteristics which, had they been exhibited by men of lower intellectual cast, and moving in a more limited sphere, would have rendered them eminent and influential in the churches of Christ. But in them they were connected with, and brought out, so to speak, by a learning and intellectual power which gave them respect ; by sound and convincing speech, penetrated by an unction which rendered them the most powerful of Preachers, Preachers who “triumphed in every place ;” by a zeal which prompted them to incessant labours ; by a physical strength which enabled them to sustain such efforts ; and by an activity which gave them a sort of ubiquity in these realms. Their faith and courage subdued mobs ; their preaching and writings stopped the mouths of gainsayers ; the gentleness of Christ in them, and the meekness of their wisdom, attracted and bound to them the hearts of all seeking and sorrowful spirits ; and rolling years, which witness so many unhappy changes, even in faith, and zeal, and charity, exhibited them still in the unwearied career of disinterested and excessive labours for the benefit of mankind,—living the same life of lofty benevolence, and walking by the same rule, in the presence of several successive generations. Thus they were made “the lights of the world ;” and every renewal of the memory of these wonderful men, by such works as the present, will but call for renewed

acknowledgments to God for his mercies in these lands, in raising up and thus qualifying such instruments for the work of reviving the spirit of primitive Christianity, and for so rich and fruitful a benediction upon their labours.

Methodism has its characteristic peculiarities derived from its Founder, which, if not accurately traced to him, and well brought out in the portraiture of his character, will elude all the criticism which may be applied to it as a religious system. Of this we have had sufficient proofs in a host of writers both friendly and hostile: Men of both classes have gone wide of the truth, and for want of tracing the stream to its fountain, have often mistaken both its course and its quality. If Wesleyan Methodism be judged of as a branch of Dissent, great errors are committed; and all conclusions are equally erroneous which regard it, now, as a society within the Church. If considered as the completion of an original plan in the Founder's mind, the critic will find its phenomena unconquerably perplexing; if, as the sport of fortuitous circumstances and caprice, he will plunge into the labyrinth on the other side. If he try it by principles of what have been called church-order, he is in danger of condemning it more than justice will allow; if he be himself a leveller of order in the church of God, he will in vain hope to find in its prosperity and success any illustration of his principles, or to derive from these circumstances any sanction to them; for it has a firm order, though it is not in bondage. Its doctrines are equally liable to elude the systematizing critic; and if he come warm and fresh from the schools, he will be apt to commit respecting them equally marked mistakes. If he think them in all points the reverse of those which are usually comprehended under the term Calvinism; or, if he fancy that in those points in which they generally agree with that system, the agreement is not without important exceptions; his conclusions will be misleading. If he judge our system to be enthusiastic, he will be at a loss to account for the sobriety he will meet with; and if he regard it as discountenancing warm emotions and the sensible communion of the interior man with God, he will be equally at a loss to make this harmonize with

expressions which unfold our views of doctrine, and with facts which record what we think to be authentic experience. Yet with all the perplexity which has so obviously embarrassed so many writers, and given rise to so many mistakes, no character exhibits so striking a simplicity as that of Mr. Wesley, and nothing is more simple than genuine Methodism. This simplicity, indeed, is the real cause of most of the mistakes which have been committed on both sides, by friends and by foes. Sectarian views in discipline, and systematic arrangements in doctrine, had long been carried, in different degrees, into extremes in the Christian church ; and have still, though right and useful to a certain extent, a misleading influence. The man, therefore, “ of one book,” the man of one object,—to win and to keep souls for Christ ; the society established for one end,—to help men on their way to heaven ; which was taught to think nothing, however revered, of paramount consequence to this ; all whose institutions have received their character from the superior importance attributed to the work of God in the heart, and have steadily regarded external forms and even doctrines as deriving their sole importance from their connexion with this work ; must both, necessarily, in pursuing their course through many changing circumstances, themselves unchanged, appear under aspects capable of very different interpretations to all by whom these leading facts, this master-key, are not steadily applied in aid of their investigations.

It is with undeviating regard to these great principles that the excellent author of these memoirs has constructed his work ; and this is the reason that he walks in the light of his subject at every step, and is able to clear away so satisfactorily the misrepresentations of others. But it is not in this only that the value of this *Life of Mr. Wesley* consists. It is equally important, perhaps much more so, to the Methodists themselves ; for, in the course of time, and by the increasing number of channels through which original principles are transmitted, they are apt, though insensibly, to assume modifications, or, at least, to lose much of their primitive freshness and power. From Mr. Moore we have them through their

most direct channel, and by him are kept near to their source. Of this advantage the Wesleyan body will not, we are persuaded, lose the benefit ; and by being reminded so clearly, so forcibly, and with so much of the genuine character of earlier times, of their own peculiarities, of the balance which they preserve between extremes, and, above all, of their very essence, “ faith which worketh by love,” they will hold them with a still firmer hand, and apply them with renovated ardour to their great practical purpose, the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ.

To one or two of those views of doctrine and discipline, to which we have adverted, as being preserved throughout the work with great judgment and discrimination, we shall briefly direct the attention of the reader ; and the more so, as they are rather transfused through the work, (which is one part of its excellence,) than stated in any part at length.

In doctrine, Mr. Wesley was not the implicit follower of any school ; the effect of which is generally, even when error is not induced, to lead to a disproportionate regard to some truth or class of truths, and to arrange them, not so much according to the rank which their intrinsic value demands, as according to their bearing upon a system. The Divines of his earliest acquaintance were those of the English Arminian class ; some of whom are of great excellence ; others are obscured with considerable errors, especially in matters of Christian experience. What he wished to be informed in, when made sensible of his need of pardon and regeneration, he certainly did not find in them ; nor in the conversation and writings of Mr. Law, which presented to his mind a picture of practical and spiritual holiness, agreeing well with what he saw in the Scriptures ; but which still were unable to show how the gate to this paradise, guarded by the flaming sword, might be passed, and the tree of life attained. It may be supposed, that had he resorted to the Calvinistic Divines, he would have obtained better information on man’s justification before God. So he would had he resorted to the writings of Arminius himself, leaving his modern followers for their better-instructed master ; but with the writings of this eminent man he was, we believe,



only very partially acquainted, till he had been for very many years settled in generally similar views of evangelical doctrine. It was better for him that he was a diligent student of the New Testament ; and that the seriousness and painful depth of his convictions of sin rendered him most sincerely desirous to secure light upon its doctrines from any quarter. He obtained it, not from elaborate writers, but from living men, who were the witnesses of the truth of their own doctrine ; from a few pious Moravians, the members of a church which had transmitted more clearly than any other the doctrine of primitive times on justification by faith, and the direct witness of the Spirit of God with the spirit of a believer. The doctrines themselves had been, it is true, retained in all evangelical churches : The very same things had been said incidentally by holy, practical theologians, ever since the Reformation ; but seldom with the same simplicity, seldom with so explicit an answer to the question, “ What shall I do to be saved ? ” We allow it to be the praise of Calvinists, that they have maintained the doctrine of justification by faith alone, with a firm hand ; and that some of their writers, perhaps all, in former times have held the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit, though in their own manner : But, to say nothing of what we, who think their general scheme erroneous, conceive to counteract the practical effect of these doctrines, the great defect appears to have been, that the blessings they exhibit to human hope had not been, in modern times, preached with that freeness of grace which characterize the promises of the word of God. We know that we shall provoke a smile from our Calvinistic brethren, when we claim a superiority for the views of the Arminian Wesley on that often-vaunted glory of Calvinism, the freeness of the grace of God ; but we do make that claim, not merely as grace offered to all, which is not the point to which we allude, but where pardon is offered to the penitent himself. In Calvinistic systems we find much preliminary work enjoined upon him ; many tests of the genuineness of his repentance to be applied ; even regeneration made to precede justification ; much discussion on what in Christ is the object of justifying

faith ; and some difficult theological distinctions to be settled, which imply no small degree of previous instruction. The witness of the Spirit, too, is, by the advocates of this system, generally made a privilege, granted only to a few, or only occasionally to the body of believers ; but not a common, abiding covenant-grant, made to “ every one that believeth.” The freeness of the offer from Arminian Methodism goes far beyond this. To all who feel their guilt and danger, it preaches the doctrine of justification by faith alone ; its simple view of faith is that of personal trust in Christ as a sacrifice and a Saviour ; its view of the freeness of the promise is, that it warrants an application to its merciful Author for a present salvation ; it regards faith as the gift of God, but given in the very effort, by a soul, despairing of every thing else, to trust in Christ ; it holds that the witness of pardon by the Spirit of God is the common privilege of all that believe ; and that all who live in the lively exercise of the same faith will retain this comforting attestation. Thus are these great blessings offered simply to all who feel their need of them, and offered now. It is in these two doctrines chiefly, thus stated, though not exclusively, that the peculiarities of Methodism, with reference to modern systems, are to be found. It is by no means peculiar to it to reject the doctrine of Calvinistic election and reprobation, bound will, and imputed righteousness ; nor is it now one of its peculiarities, to reject these notions without rejecting also doctrines which Calvinists have held in common with the orthodox church in all ages, and which are unquestionably the doctrines of the New Testament. So greatly, indeed, had those who seemed to have followed Arminius only, or chiefly, for his anti-Calvinism, verged towards Pelagianism, at the time of the rise of Methodism, that a truly evangelical Arminianism was scarcely to be found, at home or abroad. At present, however, this will be found much beyond the precincts of Methodism ; in the Church of England, and the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, and among some Dissenters ; the effect, we believe, chiefly, of that obvious connexion and consistency which Methodism has now for so many years proved to the world to exist between

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all that is vital in the Calvinistic creeds of the Reformed Churches and their most distinguished writers, and those views of God's love to man, and the absolute obligation of personal holiness on believers, which the Arminian creed exhibits. We know, indeed, that where the sentiments taught by Mr. Wesley, and those of the Calvinists, appear most to agree, there is often a considerable difference. So, in the article of man's natural corruption, in the Wesleyan doctrine that corruption is absolute; and man, in a state of nature, is capable of no good thing; a doctrine which Calvinists are, at least in disputation, obliged to soften, in order to account for good feelings, desires, &c., even in the unregenerate and reprobate, and in those who fall away finally; all which, of course, they must attribute to nature, since they will not allow them to spring from the grace of God. So also as to justification, in which they greatly confound instrumental and meritorious causes; making the imputation of Christ's righteousness one instrumental cause, and faith another. The simpler view taught by Mr. Wesley was, that the active and passive righteousness of Christ, together, constitute the meritorious cause of justification; faith, faith alone, its instrumental cause. We do not even very exactly agree in our respective views of justifying faith itself; which the Calvinistic scheme requires those who hold it, to regard as one act,—an act once for all efficient; whereas, we have been, we think, more scripturally taught, that “we live by faith;” and that this faith, constantly exercised, is constantly imputed to us for righteousness. Our differences on the doctrine of Christian holiness, both in its principle of obligation, extent, and manner of attainment, are well known. But with all these discrepancies, we are disposed still to place the great characteristics of Wesleyan doctrine, where the author, without entering at large into these points, evidently considers it as standing,—in the simplicity with which the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God is exhibited; in the freeness of its offer as an attainable present blessing on believing, by all who feel their danger; and in that concurrent direct witness of the Holy Spirit, which only can give the comfortable persuasion

of God's love to us, and enable us to call him Father ; followed by that witness of our own spirit, which arises from a consciousness of a regenerated state of mind, effected at the moment of our justification before God, though from its nature distinct ; and which, when placed, even in part, before justification, as it is by many Calvinistic writers, tends so greatly to perplex the minds of those who, conscious only of sin and danger, are seeking God in the deep sorrows of their souls.

The clearness with which these views are uniformly stated in the volume before us, whether mentioned incidentally, or more at large, will, we doubt not, have their effect, in preserving these all-important and blessed doctrines among us free from all obscurity. The success with which they have been preached, from the hour when Mr. Wesley was first clearly taught them by the work of grace in his own heart, to this day, is surely no mean proof that they are an essential part of that truth of God, on which he has so broadly and so uniformly placed his seal.

The inconsistency of the Founder of Methodism, in respect of the Church of England, is another subject on which much has been said ; and the charges made against him on this head have been continued to this time against the body itself. It is impossible that this charge should be honestly made, or adequately examined, without recourse to a fair and circumstantial Life of Mr. Wesley himself, such as is here presented. We may say with confidence, that every man who urges this accusation, upon the authority of such Memoirs as those of Whitehead, Hampson, and Southey, must necessarily do it, however honest, in ignorance of the facts of the case ; because in utter ignorance of the great guiding practical principle of the accused himself, and of the impress which that principle has left upon the body of which he was the Founder. This, none of those writers themselves knew ; or, at least, they did not choose to state it. Nor is that key to the interpretation of Mr. Wesley's conduct to be found any where but in Mr. Moore's former Life, and still more satisfactorily in the present more extended volume ; except in the Journals, and other writings of Mr. Wesley, and in the genius and character of the work

itself, of which he was made the instrument ; none of which such objectors have ever very carefully studied. We think, indeed, that the entire consistency both of Wesleyan Methodism to this day, and of its Founder, is a point to which this only genuine account of the life of Mr. Wesley (because the only account which gives the facts of his conduct with the influencing circumstances and reasons) gives abundant evidence ; and which, with little labour in arranging that evidence, may be most clearly made out. The only great question to be determined is, when the inconsistency charged commenced. If, when Mr. Wesley, not having a fixed cure of souls, preached wherever he was admitted to a church, it will have to be proved that he was obliged by his orders to take a parish ; a notion which he himself triumphantly refuted from the practice of the Church itself. If it was irregular for him to preach in other men's parishes, with their consent, this is practised daily among Clergymen to the present time.

If the charge of inconsistency cannot fix at this period, let that be taken when the churches, filled to overflowing by the effect of his ministry, were, in so many places, closed against him ; and when he sought the outcasts, who went neither to church nor meeting, in squares, streets, and fields. What rule was violated by a Clergyman in feeling compassion for them who, in the then state of clerical character, had no one to care for their souls ; and in exhorting them, out of the hours of parish-church services, to flee from the wrath to come, to fill their churches by their attendance, and to honour their ordinances ? Such exertions the Church of Rome has always applauded ; formerly they were sanctioned by the Church of England ; and Mr. Wesley himself believed, and defied any one to prove the contrary, that in this he did not violate any part of his duty as a Clergyman. This, indeed, seems to have been tacitly conceded by all who have resorted to the notion of a preconcerted plan being laid in his mind from the beginning, to make himself the head of a sect ; but that being so completely disproved, his inconsistency is disproved also. A third period is the forming of societies. As they stood at first, certainly this proves nothing. They were

not societies separated from, but more closely than formerly attached to, the Church ; and we believe that it would now be no violation of any definite and actual regulations of the Church of England, for a few pious church-people to form themselves into societies for prayer, reading the Scriptures, and other means of edification ; though in two or three, and if in two or three, in a hundred, parishes ; and being visited by Clergymen, meeting with them in private, and preaching to them in public, themselves continuing to attend their parish churches. This very thing is done on a small scale at this day, without rebuke, in several places. Here then was a Clergyman preaching in different parts of the land the very acknowledged doctrines of the Church ; here were people given to him as the fruits of his ministry, to be preserved by spiritual oversight, (which, from the state of their own Clergy, they could not receive from them,) and to be nurtured in knowledge, faith, and love, unto eternal life. Now if no inconsistency can be proved here, then it does not exist at all ; for all the anomalies which followed sprang from the Church itself incidentally, and from neither Mr. Wesley nor from subsequent Methodism. Here was an evident, a most strongly marked, work of God, in the Church, and for the Church ; the land in its length and breadth, before dead in trespasses and sins, was becoming vital ; the call of God in this renewed sounding forth of the doctrines of the Reformation, and the enforcing a spirit and conduct conformable to them, was made to the laity and to the Clergy too, by the preaching and writings of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors. Had the Clergy heard and obeyed it, then no Lay-Preachers had been necessary ; no further arrangements to maintain and extend this work : But the call was despised, its messengers calumniated, the best members of the Church repelled and persecuted. Who then was the author of the anomalies complained of ? Mr. Wesley, or the Church ? Who was consistent ? the Church which rejected the doctrines of its own Articles, and the Christian experience described in its own Liturgy ; or Mr. Wesley, who, without leaving the Church, or separating his followers from her communion, still pursued

his one aim, to spread through that Church the influence of a revival of primitive godliness? What do the objectors wish him to have done to establish this ideal consistency? To turn Dissenter? Then he must have renounced principles in which he never wavered: For he held not one of the distinguishing dogmas of Dissent. To have settled as a parish Priest? Then the people raised up by his ministry must have been left either to ungodly or careless Clergymen,—for this then was the general character of the Clergy,—or swell the ranks of Dissenting congregations. In either case, as an evangelical Churchman, his inconsistency would have been apparent. We may ask, too, of those who accuse the body, as it has existed since his death, of like inconsistency, what they would have us do? “Declare yourselves Dissenters,” say some. But many are as truly Churchmen as in Mr. Wesley’s first days; and all may be so, if they choose it, and remain, on the terms of their original communion, as rightful members of the Methodist societies as before; there is no compulsion. Others approve of a Church Establishment, though separatists on their own reasons; and, therefore, admit not the first principle of a Dissenter’s creed,—the unlawfulness of Establishments. Are these to be forced into hostility to the Church they mainly venerate; or are opinions to be forced upon their profession which they do not hold? “Become regular Churchmen,” say others, with equal wisdom. Where then is the provision for the spiritual wants of a numerous body of Christians? For, first, there are among us some Dissenters, on something like theoretical principles. And yet, with us, the eternal railing of the thorough-paced Dissenter,—his proneness to treat established usages and forms with coarse and vulgar scoffing and low buffoonery,—and, to coin an epithet, the Robert-Robinsonianism of liberal Dissent, with or without its wit,—is discountenanced, as that from which neither Christian honour nor Christian edification can spring,—a taste which is as debasing to the mind as it is corrupting to all the virtues of the heart; the bitterness of Dissent is, with few uninfluential exceptions, neutralized in our societies; whilst the principle has its Christian liberty: But such persons have their

consciences ; and who has a right to force them ? Secondly, there is a still more numerous class, who have consciences concerned in a question more directly moral,—the reception of the ordinances from Ministers whose conversion to God, and practical knowledge of the truth, is, to say the least, equivocal : How are these to be disposed of ? Thirdly, into what pasture are these numerous flocks to be turned ? The Church had made no provision for this by a generally evangelical ministry, throughout the long life of Mr. Wesley ; and he was bound not to cast away the children whom God had given him. It has, we thank God, much improved, and is improving ; but it affords nothing like a supply of godly Ministers ; and those who are so, are chiefly Calvinistic ; on which we say nothing, but that we “ have not so learned Christ.” To these serious and vital questions, such superficial speculators ought to be prepared with some specific answers, before they brandish their charges of inconsistency against us. They offer us neither folds, nor pastures, nor shepherds, nor yet can they leave us to pursue, in simplicity, that only path which true consistency opened to Mr. Wesley and to subsequent Methodism,—to be of no sect ; to help one another, and all who choose to unite with us, in the way to heaven, asking no man whether he be Churchman or Dissenter ; but giving him the right hand of fellowship, so long as he walks with us in charity, simplicity, and purity ; striving to fill the earth with the knowledge of Christ ; and regarding, as we shall always do, so long as the mantle of the ever-venerable Wesley sheds its spirit upon us, love, and love alone, as the foundation and the top-stone, the alpha and omega, of Christianity.

The second volume of the excellent biography which has suggested these observations is, we are happy to learn, in a state of forwardness ; and we shall have great pleasure in introducing it to our readers. It will, we trust, contain a review of the writings, as well as of the character, of this extraordinary and honoured man.



## REVIEW XIX.

*The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford ; in which are included, the Life of his Brother, the Rev. Charles Wesley, A.M., Student of Christ Church, and Memoirs of their Family ; comprehending an Account of the great Revival of Religion, in which they were the first and chief Instruments. By the Rev. Henry Moore, only surviving Trustee of Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts. 8vo. Vol. II. London, 1825. Pp 588.*

THIS valuable biography being now completed, we shall close our notice of it by a few remarks of a more miscellaneous kind. On its leading characteristics and general excellence, as indicated in the first volume, we have dwelt at some length ; and we sincerely congratulate the author and the Connexion, upon the completion of a work so deeply interesting, both as a history of a most extraordinary revival of religion, and as bringing into so full, and, if we may so speak, into so living a view, the chief instruments that were employed by Almighty God in commencing and establishing it.

The second volume leads the reader onward, through the labours of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors, and the extension of the work of God at home and abroad ; the difficulties which occasionally arose to dispute its progress ; the various adaptations in the economy of Methodism to the claims of imperious circumstances ; and the controversies to which the whole gave rise, until the close of Mr. Wesley's life. A review of his character and writings closes the whole. Much new matter has been introduced, with several characteristic and instructive letters and anecdotes, accompanied with incidental and valuable remarks and observations by the author.

The account of the last days, the death, and character of Mr. Charles Wesley will be read with great pleasure ; especially as it shows that in him the influence of a true piety, and concern for the salvation of men, and the spread of true reli-

gion, triumphed over the strength of those powerful prejudices which prevented his continuing to take an equal share with his more cool and persevering relative in the maturing of that work, in the commencing of which he had an equal share of labour, suffering, and success. "Towards the close of his life," says Mr. Moore, "Mr. Charles Wesley seemed to have adopted more liberal sentiments, and more comfortable views of the work. He generally feared much ; it was his besetting weakness ; but love triumphed over fear." The case, indeed, seemed to stand thus between the two brothers : Mr. Charles Wesley trembled at the very success of which he had been so great an instrument, as leading to arrangements and plans which, as a Clergyman, he felt to be irregular ; his brother rejoiced in the good done, made it his business to maintain and extend it, and left contingencies and future events to Him whose he knew the work to be. One felt more like the Minister of a particular church ; the other lived in the spirit of his own ample sentiment, that the world was his parish. The fact was, that neither could the one, with all his caution, disentangle himself from clerical irregularity ; nor could the other, in every case in which he thought himself able to prove his own irregularity to be much less than it appeared to others, always succeed. The one wished to restrain the effects of what was, in so great a degree, the fruit of his own ministry, within bounds which would have been fatal to its existence ; the other pursued his providential course, whither the Spirit led him, but with calmness and consideration : And the only exception which a severe critic can, with any share of justice, take, as to the elder brother, perhaps is, that he always appeared to himself to be a more submissive Churchman, than to all the world beside. This may be accounted for, without, in the least, impeaching Mr. Wesley's sincerity ; and by the concession of the fact he suffers nothing. But however different the judgment of these illustrious brothers and coadjutors in noble and hallowed enterprise, the result has approached nearer to the wishes than to the presentiments of either ; and has thus proved that the hand of the Lord was with them, not only in life, but in overruling and directing

their labours after their decease. Methodism has not gone so far from the Church as Mr. Charles Wesley feared, and perhaps somewhat farther than Mr. Wesley anticipated ; but it now exists in a state in which (the circumstances which have arisen being all considered) we may confidently affirm, from that view of their characters which this work contains, would inspire both, could they return from the dead, not only with satisfaction, but with grateful joy.

The character of Mr. Charles Wesley is drawn by Mr. Moore with great force and feeling.

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In the commendation of the great excellence of the Family Hymn-Book, we agree with the author ; but it is, we think, in the large Hymn-Book, in use in all our congregations, that we are to look for the noblest monument of Mr. Charles Wesley's hallowed genius ; and it is that which gives him an everlasting claim upon the gratitude of the body at large. We think it, indeed, a singular providence that two men should be raised up, so connected, so accomplished, and each with those peculiar gifts which fitted them so eminently to be the instruments of reviving the spirit of true religion, and of establishing its influence in the judgments and the hearts of men ; one, the distinguished teacher ; the other, the sweet singer of our Israel, whose varied and copious strains embody, in clear, nervous, and beautiful verse, all the principles and all the emotions of a deep-seated piety,—advancing from the dawn of religious feeling, or the painful complaint of the want of it, and from the deep terrors and alarms of an awakened conscience, through the waverings of a weak, or the triumphs of a victorious, faith, through hope and fear, through the visitations of doubts and darkness, to a settled communion with God, the entire recovery of his image, and the triumphant anticipations of his glory. Of hymns of prayer and praise, many had been written by others, and some had written them well ; but never before had all that passes in almost every heart which is the subject of a work of God, varied as that “mighty working” is in different individuals, been expressed in such compositions ; in which every feeling flows forth in

appropriate words, that seem to leave nothing, in the hearts of any, untold to God ; nothing unformed into a devotional act ; and which, therefore, on all experimental subjects, especially, become so fit and edifying a medium of private and public worship. Methodism, indeed, would have suffered much if neither of the brothers had been endowed with poetic talents. Had that talent been less eminent, we should at this day have been doomed to sing, as part of our devotions, strains less ennobling, less nervous, and, consequently, less beneficially influential ; had it not existed, Mr. Wesley must have resorted to Tate and Brady, to Watts and Doddridge,—all infinitely inferior in strength and purity of style, and none of them entering so deeply and so richly into the things of God. We speak of the compositions of these distinguished men, of course, as a whole, allowing that in particular hymns and psalms they are sometimes very eminent. But Dr. Watts himself, by far the best maker of hymns previously, is unequal, and though delightful in his harmony, tinselly and sometimes puerile in his imagery. None of the hymns composed by the authors above alluded to, had they been even more poetically excellent, could, however, have conveyed the theology of the Wesleyan body. This important end is secured by the large Hymn-Book. The language of the standard Sermons, and Notes on the New Testament, is the language of the Hymns : And as those who object to forms of prayer do not object to forms by which to sing ; and as the Hymns can never become obsolete in style, so long as the English language retains its purity and good taste, and reverential piety shall remain, they will greatly serve the same important purpose in the Methodist Connexion, as the Liturgy in the Church of England,—they will be an important guard around our doctrines, and serve to check all defection from their purity. The honour conferred by God upon the consecrated genius of Charles Wesley is singularly great. Perhaps not an hour has passed, for the last fifty years, in which his verses have not been a means of raising devout affections in some minds ; and how often have they been repeated with rapture by dying Christians ! In how many parts of the earth, where the English language is known,

though spoken with broken accents, and in some other languages also, do his verses now give expression to the sighs of a broken, and the grateful emotions of a healed, spirit ! Whilst we bless God for John Wesley as the Divine, we ought to be equally thankful for Charles as the poet. The debasing, scoundrel doggerel which has been occasionally strung together in petty pamphlets, and, for a time, obtained popularity in some parts of the north of England, attracting the vulgar ear by its rude and boisterous jingle, or its sign-post painting style of imagery, is one proof of the importance of a standard Hymn-Book.

Mr. Moore has, of course, introduced, among the coadjutors of Mr. Wesley, the late Dr. Coke, and has given a short biographical sketch of that eminently useful individual. In this digression, it strikes us, that there is either too much said, or too little : Too much, if the only reason for introducing Dr. Coke was, to complete the history of the progress of Methodism, and to explain the proceedings of the leading subject of the work ; but far too little, to convey any adequate idea of the character and labours of a man so eminent, and the effects of whose zeal and generous self-devotion to the cause of God at home and abroad, will be felt in so many distant parts of the earth for many generations. As the author did not intend to give even a comprehensive sketch of Dr. Coke's life, we can see no reason, no historical necessity, why so much is said of his early personal experience ; which is given in rather an obscure manner, with some singular saving clauses, and certainly with a coldness which but ill accords with that warm and grateful remembrance which Dr. Coke's character and services in the cause of God, and a perishing world of Heathens, have deservedly fixed in the minds of the Methodist Connexion and the Christian public. This portion of the work appears to have been written somewhat under the feeling of times, and differences of opinion, and party collisions, long since past, and in which now scarcely ten persons can be found who have any interest at all. The modern race of Methodists, and the religious public, know Dr. Coke, not in those difficult situations in which he was placed, or placed himself, between

Mr. Wesley and the Preachers, from which Mr. Moore's estimate of him seems to have taken a tinge, but by what is infinitely more important, by his eminent and never-to-be-forgotten "works of faith and labours of love."

The author has spent some time in showing that Episcopacy, by name, was not introduced into the American Methodist society by the sanction of Mr. Wesley, who, though he in point of fact did ordain Bishops for the American societies, intended them to be called Superintendents. To the statement of this, as an historical fact, no objection certainly lies; but the way in which it is enlarged upon, and the insertion of an objurgatory letter from Mr. Wesley to Mr. Asbury on the subject, (whatever characteristic excellencies the letter possesses,) can have no tendency but to convey to the reader an impression somewhat unfavourable to Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, as though they were ambitious of show and title. Mr. Moore, indeed, candidly enough relieves this, by admitting that, on Mr. Wesley's principle itself, and in his own view, they were true scriptural *Episcopoi*; and that Mr. Wesley's objection to the name of Bishop, in fact, arose from its association in his mind, rather with the adventitious honours which accompany it in Church Establishments, than with the simplicity and pre-eminence of labour, care, and privation, which the office has from the first exhibited in America, and from which it could not, from circumstances, depart. According to this showing, the objection was grounded upon no principle, and was a mere matter of taste or expediency. If there was any flaw in this transaction, it was in the act itself of ordaining to the episcopal office; but, if not, as the author, we think, satisfactorily shows, considering the state of the American societies, then the assumption of the scriptural name, as the thing itself was contended to be scriptural, ought not to have been so represented as to give unnecessary offence to our American brethren, by any innuendo of ambition in men to whom they have been accustomed to look with reverence as the founders of their own peculiar institution. For them that peculiar form of church discipline seems to have been as necessary and useful, as it is unnecessary, and would be injurious, to Methodism in this country; and

whether the name had or had not the sanction of Mr. Wesley, is now of the least possible consequence, as the Episcopacy itself was of his creating. The stress of criticism will never lie upon the term, but upon the ordination itself. If the only object of introducing the subject was, to show Mr. Wesley's love of simplicity, two lines, we think, would have done that as effectually as so many pages. The moral would have been as pointed, and the tenderness to the individuals concerned, greater.

Incidentally connected with this account, we find a passage which is capable, we presume, of being carried farther than the excellent author himself intended.

“Where the necessity did not appear, he (Mr. Wesley) highly respected antiquity, and would never deviate from the accumulated wisdom of ages, or shock the common sense of mankind. The moment he saw the necessity of giving an entire Gospel ministry to his people, he revolted from conferring it in any way not sanctioned by the apostolic practice, or the usage of the purest ages that succeeded them. Hence, he never would acknowledge any ministry that was not conferred in the scriptural, apostolic, and ancient way, by ‘laying on of hands.’”

Unquestionably, Mr. Wesley had no idea of ordination, properly so called,—that is, appointment to the full exercise of the Christian ministry in all its branches,—unaccompanied with the imposition of hands. He would be led to this from the examples in the New Testament, and the practice of almost all churches, from the earliest times, whether of national Establishments, or those dissenting from them. Accordingly, some have thought, that when, upon those changes which took place among us after Mr. Wesley's decease, the act of receiving Preachers into full Connexion became professedly a proper ordination to the full ministry, this form ought to have come in along with it, agreeably to Mr. Wesley's own view above stated, and to his practice in those cases in which he gave ordination during his life. We think there is much weight in this. That act of the Conference, by which its Preachers are received, is truly and sub-

stantially ordination, and may as well be called by this established ecclesiastical term as by any other. This is, in truth, its nature and essence, whatever it may be called; but though absolutely and substantially scriptural, it can scarcely be considered as circumstantially conformable to the scriptural model, without this primitive, authorized, and almost universal rite; and seeing the scriptural example, and the general practice of churches, cannot be denied, if any object to it, they are rather bound to show reasons why the scriptural precedents ought not to be conformed to, than entitled to demand reasons why they ought; when this is surely sufficient, that the example is actually in the word of God. But though this is our view, the passage above quoted seems to intimate, that the “laying on of hands” is of the essence of ordination, and that the latter cannot exist without it. This, we believe, is in appearance only, and what the author did not intend to convey; and we have made these remarks to prevent this misunderstanding, whilst we wish the authority of Mr. Wesley’s judgment on this point to have its due weight. Imposition of hands is not, certainly, essential to ordination; it is not ordination itself, but an expressive, significant act, by which ordination is indicated,—a mode of doing that which may be otherwise done. But since it is of the first importance to keep as near to the scriptural model in all sacred offices as possible; seeing that Almighty God may have reasons for what is circumstantial and ceremonial which are unknown to us, and because of that humble deference which we owe to what he has appointed, though it be but in the way of example; and, further, because of the expressiveness of the act itself, and the additional solemnity which it imparts to the most solemn act of the Ministers of the Christian church; the reasons ought to be very weighty which can wholly justify a Christian church in abstaining from it.

In page 437 is inserted the last letter which Mr. Wesley ever wrote. This circumstance would give us an interest in it; but it is on negro-slavery, a subject of lively interest at the present moment. He had borne an early and honourable testimony against the trade in human beings, that grievous



national sin, which so long loaded our country with guilt, and from which it never can be fully freed, until effectual measures are adopted by the Legislature for the ultimate extinction of slavery throughout the empire ; and this letter, as Mr. Moore justly observes, was “ a fit close to a life spent in preaching deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to those who were bound.” The gentleman to whom it was addressed was, we believe, Mr. Wilberforce,—that yet honourably calumniated individual, who has surrounded himself, throughout his public life, with the glorious shame of advocating the cause of a race who, to this day, are esteemed goods and chattels, and bought and sold like the beasts that perish.

“ DEAR SIR,                      LONDON, *February 26th, 1791.*

“ UNLESS the divine Power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villany, which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O ‘be not weary in well doing!’ Go on, in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it.

“ Reading this morning a tract wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance,—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress ; it being a law, in all our colonies, that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villany is this !

“ That He who has guided you from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and in all things, is the prayer of,

“ Dear Sir,

“ Your affectionate servant,

“ JOHN WESLEY ”

Such was Mr. Wesley's brief, but strong, and almost dying, testimony against slavery, which, we trust, none of his followers will ever forget.

The author, page 418, justly commends the brevity and clearness of Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament ; especially as they were intended to be one of the standards of doctrine in the body ; and in this work, with respect to theological difficulties, Mr. Moore observes, " As he informed me, he took care not to bind any man's conscience where God had not bound it." In a note Mr. Moore instances some of those " difficult questions," which Mr. Wesley, as he states, left thus free. We demur to two of the three which he has adduced ; but to the third, the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell, we agree with him. It is a point on which Mr. Wesley was too wise and too liberal to bind any man. Mr. Moore, however, seems, in the conclusion of his note, to treat the doctrine of Christ's descent into that region of Hades, which is popularly called " hell," with greater seriousness, imagining it to be connected with a possible pernicious consequence, which few, we believe, have ever suspected, and for which, certainly, there is no logical foundation. He has not stated the reason for that opinion, as held in modern times, with exactness. " One of its principal supports," he observes, " is, that as all power was given to Christ, so he must take possession of every part of his dominions, and consequently of hell." Now, so stated, we believe that this has seldom, if ever, been urged as an argument for this opinion ; and, when correctly stated, it has not been urged " as one of its principal supports," being, at best, a secondary and auxiliary reason. The real ground of this opinion, which we grant ought to be as free as the author represents Mr. Wesley to have left it, is, that, in the judgment of those who adopt it, several important passages of Scripture are more satisfactorily explained by the hypothesis ; and the consideration of these forms a subject of biblical criticism, certainly not to be dispatched in two sentences of a note. The argument by which Mr. Moore connects this opinion with the salvation of fallen spirits, is wholly, and on the first view, futile, and can leave no impression but

that of surprise : “ But did he thus take possession of hell as the Son of Man and Mediator ? If so, then it should seem, there is hope for those consigned to it.” This, indeed, would be valid, if he took possession, as Mediator “ for those consigned to it ;” but, unfortunately for the author’s argument, nobody has affirmed this ; and he might take possession, as Son of Man, in a far different character from that of Mediator, even that of Lord and Judge ; “ for the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also,” for this very reason, “ because he is the Son of Man.” The conclusion of the author on this point depends wholly on an assumed and unsound premise, and the doctrine is left as innocent as he found it. It has about the same relation to the consequence which his note would connect with it, as Tenterden steeple to the Goodwin Sands.

Mr. Moore’s view of the character of Mr. Wesley is in his best manner ; discriminating, just, embued with affectionate and venerating remembrance, dignified, and no where deteriorated in its effect by the common-places of panegyric. It is, perhaps, too limited in his range of topics ; but highly instructive. The observations on his writings are exceedingly just ; but knowing, as we do, the peculiar fitness of the author to have presented an analysis of the most important labours of Mr. Wesley’s pen, and to have drawn out his doctrinal views on some of those points by which he was most distinguished from others, and to exhibit their true lines of demarkation, and their bearing on the general system of experimental Christianity, we regret that what is so excellent as far as it has been done, should not have been carried farther.

In the course of the work, we have observed two or three instances of an approach to sarcasm, in speaking of individuals, which might as well have been omitted. We may instance the preface, where Mr. Southey is called “ a writer by trade,” and allusion is made to “ his patrons the booksellers ;” as implying some reflection upon his sincerity. On the fairest grounds, Mr. Southey has received in that powerful preface, and in the course of the work, his “ portion of meat in due

season ;” but, generally speaking, it is surely no disgrace to any man to be a writer by profession. Such was Dr. Johnson, and such were many others, whose names have the most honourable places in our national literature ; nor does it follow from this, that a writer should, as a matter of course, lend his conscience to please his “patrons the booksellers,” any more than that a Preacher by profession should bend the truth to please his congregation. Mr. Southey was incompetent to the task of writing the Life of Mr. Wesley ; he got out of the path, for this plain reason, that he “walked in darkness ;” and in a few instances he has offended against candour, and submitted to the dominion of prejudice : But we see no reason to charge him with intentional wrong ; and we have a much better opinion of him than to believe, that he would knowingly sacrifice truth for the sake of making his book more saleable. These, however, and some other minor opinions and remarks, rest with the author ; for though this Life of Mr. Wesley is to be regarded as, in some sense, the authorized and sanctioned publication of the Conference, by whom it was gratefully received upon the offer of the author, who generously devotes the profits to the carrying on of the work of God by the instrumentality of the body ; yet every author must claim a large scope for the exercise of his own judgment in works so miscellaneous as this, and the Connexion can only stand committed to it in substance.

As a whole, that Connexion owes a large debt of gratitude to the venerable author, for undertaking so laborious a task at an advanced period of life, and for the vigour and ability with which he has executed it. To the Methodists themselves it is an invaluable treasure ; though we still think, high as our sense is of the value of these volumes, that a Life of Mr. Wesley, adapted to the religious public at large, is still a desideratum. Such a work would be freed from many of those details which are interesting chiefly to the Methodists themselves, and from the greater part of those disciplinary and personal controversies and bickerings, which, though they engaged attention for the time, were but of temporary interest, and have, in some instances, been too carefully perpetuated among our-

selves. For such a work the present will, at some future time, furnish valuable materials, and would still retain its own peculiar interest were one more general in its object executed in the ablest manner.

To Mr. Moore's work is added an Appendix, occupying about one hundred pages, and consisting of a correspondence between Mr. Wesley and a person who assumed the name of John Smith, (who is generally supposed to have been Archbishop Secker,) on some of the most important doctrines of Methodism. Mr. Wesley's letters contained in this correspondence will be read with lively interest; for, although they cannot be considered as expressing his maturest thoughts on the subjects of which they treat, being written at an early period of his extraordinary career; yet they will be found to comprise much valuable instruction; and the Methodistical student, especially, will be disposed to present to Mr. Moore his cordial thanks for their publication.

## REVIEW XX.

1. *Lectures on the Principles and Institutions of the Roman Catholic Religion.* By Joseph Fletcher, A.M. 8vo. Third Edition. Pp. 397. 1823.
2. *The Protestant Reformation Vindicated : A Discourse delivered in Lune-Street Chapel, Preston.* By Joseph Fletcher, A.M. Second Edition. Pp. 39. 1825.
3. *On the Prophecies concerning Antichrist : A Discourse.* By Joseph Fletcher, A.M. Pp. 48. 1825.
4. *A Brief Historical Reference to the Three Capital Offences of the Church of Rome : The Sale of Indulgences, the Murder of Heretics, and the Deposition of Sovereign Princes.* By Rusticus. Pp. 98. 1824.
5. *Remarks on the Rev. T. Tyson's Attack on Protestantism and Bible Societies.* By Jacob Stanley. Pp. 79. 1821.
6. *Popery Indefensible : Being Strictures on the Rev. T. Tyson's Observations.* By Jacob Stanley. Pp. 40. 1822.
7. *A Roman Catechism ; faithfully drawn out of the Allowed Writings of the Church of Rome, with a Reply thereto.* By the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. Four Parts. 12mo. 1825.
8. *Popery Calmly Considered.* By the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. 12mo. Pp. 20. 1825.
9. *Tracts upon some of the Leading Errors of the Church of Rome* By the Rev. George Hamilton, A M., Rector of Killermogh. 12mo Pp. 100. 1824.

IN inviting the attention of our readers to the publications at the head of this article, we call them, in fact, to enter into that grand controversy between Protestantism and Popery, which for many ages, in our own and other countries, partially or entirely freeing themselves from the yoke of the Papacy, took the lead of almost every other subject of investigation, and held a place of the first importance in the schools of theology, and in the closet of the intelligent and reading private Christian. If any ask why we direct attention to questions so ancient and so obsolete, we answer, "Is there not a

cause?" Ancient they are; but unhappily not obsolete. They are forced upon our attention by the renewed struggles of anti-Christian superstition for ascendancy; and by that spirit of proselytism among the members of the Romish communion, which hopes to succeed just in proportion as it hopes to find the controversy forgotten among Protestants, and the descendants of their ancient antagonists stripped of those victorious arms, which by too many have long been laid aside and suffered to become rusty, as though the battle were never again to be turned to the gate. That the Protestants of this country are, generally, thus naked and defenceless, except as the influence of a few general principles may guard them from sudden assault, is a fact too obvious not to create a proper anxiety in those whose business it is specially to watch over them in the Lord, and to arm them fully against the errors of the times; and it is one of which the enemy, always watchful, and hoary in subtlety, is endeavouring to avail himself. For, however efficient prejudice and general principles may be in resisting a *coup de main*, we much question whether one Protestant in five hundred, among us, is fully prepared to meet the slow approaches of that mining and insidious sophistry for which the emissaries of the Church of Rome are so remarkable; and much less to take offensive weapons, and approach the camp, and attack the lines of the invader. Yet is it clear, that Popery and Protestantism must come into contact in this country in many quarters where they have long lain slumbering side by side; and that an activity is now excited which must issue in good or evil.

We are not among those who look upon the revival of these discussions with pain, much less with apprehension. On the contrary, if, on the part of the Protestants, they are conducted with sobriety as well as vigour; if the establishing of true principles do not lead to the careless admission of false ones which lie on the other extreme; and if the spirit of sympathizing kindness and charity, which is the glory of true Protestantism,—the charity which spares no error, and wounds no person,—shall embue all that is written and preached on the subjects which the controversy involves; nothing but good

can result from it. The very excitement which exists in the minds of the adherents of Popery, is so far favourable, that it introduces truth to their notice ; and we know no other means by which this most deadly of all anti-Christian systems can be effectually overturned, than the word of God, and the power of those spiritual weapons which it so abundantly supplies.

The great blame which rests upon the Protestants of this country appears to us to be, that the subject has been so long suffered to sleep ; that Protestantism has not been more pitying ; and that Protestants should ever have thought their work accomplished by winning their own liberties, and breaking the yoke from their own necks. They have been, at least in modern times, too little impressed with the tremendous character of Popery as a system of spiritual delusion, fatal to the souls of men, as well as inimical to the dearest civil and religious liberties of the empire. If Ireland is so dark, it is because we have placed our light under a bushel ; and if there are Popish parts of England, it is because neither the Church of England, nor the sects, have done their duty. We are all in large arrears of Christian kindness to this class of our fellow-countrymen ; and the embarrassment now existing, from a large Popish population, in our political state, is the punishment of this supineness. We have had idolaters at our very doors ; we have seen millions of men building on a foundation different from that which has been laid in Scripture,—Jesus Christ ; we have seen them bewildered in the mazes of a gross and demoralizing superstition, and have done nothing in comparison of what ought to have been enterprised by us, in the establishment of schools, the distribution of tracts, and the appointment of specially qualified Ministers to visit them ; as though it were reason enough for this inaction, that their interested Priests were roused to fury by the partial attempts actually made, and that infidels have joined them in branding such acts of Christian charity, as the intrusions of a fanatic spirit of proselytism.

The grand delusion by which the body of Protestants in this country appear, in late years, to have been misled, as to



Popery, is the notion, that it would become extinct by being left to the joint effects produced upon it by infidelity, "the spirit of the age," and the progress of education. The refutation of this notion is, that all these have been long, in different degrees, in operation, and yet Popery is as active and as deep-seated as ever. Here we might leave the case; but it may not be uninteresting to consider the separate parts of this opinion more particularly.

That Popery is the prolific parent of infidelity, cannot be doubted. In Italy, France, and Spain, the scepticism of men of education is notorious; and even the most malignant writers against the common faith have sprung out of those hot-beds of superstition. But the great body of an uncultivated people can never become infidels, nor remain so; and when nothing better is known among them, the reaction—and reaction in almost all cases occurs—must be to superstition. Where there is no rope, the sinking wretch will catch at the straw which is floating with him down the same tide. If the conversion of a whole people from too much faith to none at all were practicable; if it were not rendered impossible by that something in man, which is at once inexplicable and indubitable,—a sense of religious want; no Protestant could contemplate the process without horror. Such an event will not, however, occur; and the only question then is, whether infidelity among the influential few will show itself friendly to the attempts of true Christians, to bring over the remaining body of superstitious and simple people, in any Popish country, to a purer form of Christianity. Those who think so are forgetful of that malignity to the Gospel of our Saviour, in its purity, which characterizes the thorough-paced infidel. It is the Gospel, as it stands in the Scriptures only, which he has to dread; and it is that which he therefore hates,—hates infinitely more than those corrupted forms of Christianity which are tender of his vices, and provide an easy passage for him into another world, should he relent, by simple conformity to outward rites. Popery and infidelity have no necessary hostility. When the latter has been in its fits of political revolutionary fervour, and has met with resistance from the influence of the Romish Eccle-

siastics, or Ecclesiastics of any kind, it has naturally turned upon them with hatred and fury ; but in most Papal countries they have been found in harmonious juxta-position for centuries. Scepticism has not unfrequently peeped forth with satisfied aspect from the cowl, the mitre, and the very tiara itself ; and the Popish Priests of Ireland are not at this moment more zealous to ridicule, or more active to obstruct, the circulation of the Scriptures among the Irish laity, or more bitter in their sarcasms against the zeal of pious Protestants, or more loud in their reprobation of all attempts at what they call proselytism, than the infidels and freethinkers of the day, both in high and in low places, whether in their character of annual legislators, or weekly scribblers. The philosophers and statesmen of Greece and Rome were infidels, as to the popular superstitions of those countries ; but they thought it their policy to uphold them, and became, when Christianity made its appearance, in what would be called, in the phrase of modern liberals, its proselyting character, its bitterest and most callous persecutors. A like disposition may be discovered in the infidelity of our own day, wherever political circumstances do not interfere : And they can only interfere in revolutionary seasons ; for in the ordinary, settled course of things, superstition in the mass will be found a better instrument than any other to promote those selfish ends for which men who abandon themselves to total unbelief only can live, and beyond which there can be no genuine philanthropy to impel them.

The reliance placed on “the spirit of the age,” as a means of curing errors which require to be substituted by the truth of the Gospel, (and without this nothing is done which meets the case of man himself, or which ought to satisfy the Christian,) is to us one of the emptiest of all vain expectations. For we are at a loss to conceive the connexion that exists between the cause on which so much dependence is placed, and the effect which is to be produced. That “spirit of the age” may be a spirit of commerce, or favourable to the cultivation of the arts or sciences ; but all these are consonant enough with Popery. In the brightest periods of the com-

mercial history of Spain and Portugal, when the spirit of travel and discovery was in its highest and most heroic excitement, and all the arts, which commerce with foreign lands brought into exercise or imported, were most diffused, superstition bound their finest geniuses with her strongest bands, and the Inquisition was in its full dominion. The "spirit of the age" is nothing in relation to the breaking down of Popery, if it be not imbued strongly and effectually with the spirit of religion; and that is a spirit which, as Protestants, we are bound to believe can only result from the Scriptures, from evangelical preaching, from prayer, and from the Holy Spirit; and, to be brought to bear upon any country and people, it must be carried out in inseparable connexion with all these means. The spirit of the age may indeed be a spirit of inquiry, which devotes itself, among other things, to religion; though that by no means necessarily follows: But inquiry, though it may unlock the hold which one class of errors has upon the minds of men, can grasp no truths in religion unless they are placed within its reach; nor always then, since the heart of man has a natural aversion to religious truth, and requires the diligent enforcement of it upon itself by a present, active, and constant agency, accompanied by the divine blessing.

Dependence on education, if by that is meant the teaching of the elements of literature, exclusive of religion, is a dream as delusive as the former. We grant that in such a country as Ireland, it is better to educate without religion, than not at all; for when the art of reading, for instance, is acquired, some instructive book, some portion of the blessed volume, or the whole of it, may, in this land of Bibles, fall into the hands of the person so taught. But if the work of education is depended upon to produce the effect of destroying superstitious sentiments, and so to weaken the influence of Popery as to render a more direct religious agency unnecessary, we deceive ourselves as to its efficiency. Even a high education, and the full dominion of Popish bigotry and superstition may co-exist in the same person, and do actually co-exist in thousands. The body of French emigrants, who have returned to their own country since the restoration of the Bourbon family, were

generally men of the best education ; they had lived in this enlightened country ; the boasted “spirit of the age” had, for twenty years, surrounded them with its atmosphere ; but the counsels now followed in that country, under their influence, show that they are infected to the core with the most concentrated virus of Popery, and a fierce intolerance ; and that their full purpose is to bring back, and to impress upon France, the character of the superstition of the middle ages. This, then, is an example which powerfully demonstrates the inefficiency of civil education, with even the influence of liberalizing circumstances, to free the mind from Popish infatuation. In answer to those who place so much of their hope on mere education, it may also be asked, “Are all the bigoted and superstitious Catholics uneducated and illiterate ?” We have a “Book of the Church” from Mr. Southey, an educated Protestant ; we have a “Book of the Church” from Mr. Butler, a writer as well educated, and more subtle, and of deeper research ; yet the one is liberal, the other bigoted and popishly fanatic. We have a History of England by Hume, an educated Freethinker ; we have another from the Jesuit Lingard ; the former insinuates against Christianity, the latter against Protestantism ; one misrepresents for Atheism, the other for Popery ; and where, then, in either case, shall we look for the supposed moral and religious effects which so many are disposed to attribute to the talisman of mere education ?

The present state of things calls upon us to throw away with disdain, as beneath the reason of men, and the lofty thinkings inspired by a true Christianity, all those ill-concocted and vapid speculations, uttered at first by folly, and made current by the jingle of phrase, and the air of philosophy. The fact before us is, that five or six millions of our countrymen are Papists. We do not use this term in contempt, but because we think that the professors of Popery have no more claim to the term Catholic, than the Socinians have to that of Unitarians. This is their form of religion. If we and the Founders of Protestantism (that host of mighty names with whom we are too little familiar in the present day) are right ;

if there be plain and unsophisticated truth in Scripture, the Papists are idolaters: They trust for their salvation to refuges of lies, and thus make a covenant with death; they find in their religion a substitute for morality; they are ignorant semi-barbarians, and generally wretched; and, to crown the whole, they are infected with a fierce and malignant bigotry, and, instead of love, make hatred the badge of their Christianity. The depth of their moral degradation, and those aggregated delusions which lead them astray, are then the very circumstances which, when the subject is viewed in the light and with the feeling of right and true Protestantism, bring them within the yearnings of our kindest commiseration, and show that theirs is a case, the cure of which is not to be left to the hypothetic influence of any accidental causes, probable or improbable; but that the most direct and efficient remedy is called for, and that we who have that remedy, must not turn away from them like the Priest and the Levite, but follow the example of the Samaritan. With us it is no argument, that their leaders are full of wrath, and that they are banding together to make their Church and themselves triumphant over Protestantism in Ireland. Without glancing at any of those civil questions which are now under discussion before the Legislature, and which divide the opinions of some wise and good men on both sides; it is a matter not to be doubted that the most strenuous attempts are making in Europe to restore the influence of the Papal superstition; and the adherents of that religion in the United Kingdom cannot but be encouraged to use their best exertions at home for the same purpose. The influence of their own nobility and gentry is more actively employed in consequence; and no small encouragement is probably given to Irish Popery in its present struggle for power by foreign Courts. The Priests have set the example of a most insolent opposition to School and Bible Societies conducted by Protestants: They have claimed, and their gentry, with the infidels of our own nation, have supported them in their assumption, to set up an entire spiritual despotism over several millions of our fellow-subjects; to deny to them, under threats and penalties, the benefits

of education, and all access to the Scriptures: Nor less, whilst they boast of their own activity in proselyting the Protestants, have they endeavoured to bar out even the very right of Protestants individually, or by associations, to endeavour to bring over to a purer and better faith this ignorant and immoral peasantry,—itself a scandal to the Romish priesthood, and the open proof of the inefficacy of their instructions to any one practical purpose of Christianity. Such claims are the objects only of a silent contempt; but factious and wicked as the leaders in this great struggle may be, we think that the developement which they have made of an unconquerably hostile disposition to the intellectual and moral improvement of the body of the people, and of their intention to rivet their spiritual chains, entitles the latter the more to the pity and charity of those who regard the whole of the community as the objects of their benevolence, and know that, in the Scriptures and in the ordinances of the Gospel, they possess the means of benefiting them in both worlds. The only weapons by which Popery can be assailed successfully are spiritual; this is the point we wish to press home upon the hearts and consciences of our readers; and to make the desired impression, let Protestants gird up themselves for the hallowed contest. Not only renewed zeal for the circulation of the holy Scriptures must be enkindled by the opposition which this work of pious charity has called forth, but the number of faithful Ministers, willing to labour and suffer, must be multiplied, and a larger portion of Protestant property employed to provide the means of religious education, and to multiply useful agents of every description wherever Popery abounds among us. We know the difficulties; but we know also that the longer the work of acting aggressively upon Popery, by the united truth and love of our religion, is delayed, the greater those difficulties will become; and when we put ourselves into such an attitude of preparation and exertion, as to warrant us to expect the special blessing of God upon our labours, we shall not look for that blessing in vain. By these means only this anti-Christian superstition can be purged from our land; by the diffusion not of human science merely, but

of evangelical truth,—not of the spirit of the age, but of the spirit of active, pitying Christianity; by raising up, through the preaching of the Gospel, companies of enlightened, simple-hearted Christians in every part of Ireland, and in the Popish parts of Lancashire, and other places in England; by penetrating the mass of the population in the Popish quarters of London, Manchester, Liverpool, and wherever they are found in great numbers; and by employing all who are thus saved themselves from the darkness of Popery, to enlighten others; in one word, not to suffer any longer our deluded Papist fellow-subjects to remain a neglected caste in the community, for whom none or but few care, but to seek them out in kindness and charity. We are sure that all this is possible; and it will be done, if Protestants do not suffer their zeal to evaporate in the strife of wordy discussions for or against those civil questions which have been so long in debate, and which, however determined, will leave the Popish population of the empire as dark and as erring as ever. Their case has, indeed, been forced upon the public notice by those discussions; and we trust the issue will be, exertions more systematic and ample, on the part of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, and all men for his sake, in behalf of a class of our fellow-subjects so near our light, and yet in so gross a darkness.

The true knowledge of the principles of Popery and Protestantism is, however, a necessary part of the process of qualifying Protestants, awakened to a sense of their duty, to apply themselves successfully to a right and efficient discharge of it; and it is with this view that we recommend the works mentioned at the head of this article. In our standard English Divines, the well-replenished, and, as we may call it, the national armoury will be found; and the merit of all modern publications can only be, that they contain a judicious choice of weapons from it, for the particular object to which they are directed. The first publication on the list goes into all the leading parts of the controversy with great acuteness and ability; and, being popular, is the more calculated to be useful. The discourse which follows, vindicates the Reformation, which, not only by Papists, but by some infidel writers

of our own day, shooting chiefly with the bow prepared for them by their Papist patrons, has been contemptuously and vulgarly vilified. All the principles laid down in this discourse are not well guarded, but, as a whole, it is worthy of perusal. The third proves, by the usual marks, that the Papal power is the emphatic Antichrist of the Scriptures,—a point on which we think no man can reasonably doubt, who allows himself fairly to interpret the word of God. The fourth pamphlet in the list successfully charges the three offences, mentioned in the title-page, on the Church of Rome, by a copious reference to her own authorities, and the established facts of history, and will be found an exceedingly useful manual in the controversy. The author styles himself “Rusticus,” but he assuredly is no rustic. The abominations, cruelties, and deceivableness of unrighteousness of the Romish Church are strongly exhibited; and the misrepresentations of Lingard are occasionally pointed out.

Mr. Stanley’s remarks were called forth by a very bitter and indecent attack of an English Roman Catholic Priest, in Staffordshire, who uses much the same arguments against Protestantism, and the right of the laity to read the Scriptures, as have since been resorted to by the same class of men in Ireland, in their assaults upon Bible Societies. These arguments are met and refuted with much acuteness of remark and liveliness of manner; and the errors charged upon the Church of Rome are generally supported by reference to authorities. In every point, Mr. Stanley’s pamphlets (the personal skirmishes with his opponent excepted) are applicable to the controversy as it is now going on, and will be read with great advantage. Mr. Wesley’s Roman Catechism, just republished in four cheap tracts, is an admirable compendium of the whole controversy; with this great convenience, that the principles adduced against the Papal Church are all drawn out of the allowed writings of her advocates, and her own acknowledged acts. The answers are in Mr. Wesley’s own style,—brief, clear, and convincing. This most useful synopsis we recommend to be read first by all who are commencing the study of the grounds of their faith as Protestants,



and as a necessary and easy introduction to the larger works.

Mr. Wesley's "Popery Calmly Considered" is also a republication of a very able and useful tract, in which several of the subjects in the foregoing Catechism are considered somewhat more at length.

The last article is by a learned and very excellent Irish Clergyman, and contains a number of short tracts, collectively or separately well calculated for popular distribution ; and, in the form of separate tracts, would be highly useful in England as well as Ireland. They are written in the spirit of deep seriousness and Christian kindness, and contain a lucid though brief view of the argument on each of the subjects discussed.

These works cannot be read without deepening that general conviction which prevails among all serious Protestants,—that the errors of the Church of Rome are not of that class which may excite smiles for their absurdity, though often sufficiently absurd ; but tears poured forth from hearts suitably moved with the consideration, that they affect the very fundamental principles of Christianity, and mislead men in the infinitely-important interests of their salvation. We have already stated generally what the great body of pious Protestants in both countries ought to do in this pressing case, so intimately connected with the peace and security of the empire, as well as with the moral and religious condition of between five and six millions of our fellow-countrymen. But we should be sorry that such a subject should evaporate in generalities ; and trust that a work to which all are so loudly called will become the subject of serious consultation among all denominations of Protestants, with reference to quickened and enlarged exertions. In many respects, they may, probably, co-operate jointly ; in others, and those, probably, the most immediately efficient, they will be obliged to proceed separately, according to their own views and modes ; but, in all, we trust it will be done with one heart, though not with one judgment. It appears to us, that each body of Protestants ought immediately to inquire what new or more energetic

means it can adopt, to discharge this long arrear of duty to our misled and deluded fellow-subjects. To such an inquiry the answer would be very naturally suggested. To take our own Connexion for an example : Nothing is more obvious than our path of duty. Our enlarged system of Missions and of Mission-Schools in Ireland must be vigorously supported and carefully superintended. It ought not to be suffered to languish in any one of its operations, whether itinerant preaching, the means of education, the distribution of proper tracts on the first principles of doctrinal, experimental, and practical Christianity, or the employment of the agency of pious converts in various departments of usefulness. Our regular Irish Connexion presents a large and efficient apparatus, to spread the truth and power of religion in almost every direction ; and requires that we more affectionately cherish it, and interest ourselves still more in those embarrassments and difficulties which have for a few years past unhappily controlled its energies ; for, certainly, such an agency for doing good to Ireland is not within the reach of any body of Protestants in England, whose affectionate sympathies are alive to the best interests of the sister country. From Ireland it strikes us, as a probable enterprise, that qualified persons might be brought, speaking the native language, and placed in a most useful sphere of activity ; one in each large town in England, where great masses of the lower orders of Irish are collected ; and for the Popish parts of Lancashire, some additional English Preachers, of special qualifications for the work, might be employed, on such a system of itinerant preaching, the establishment of schools, the circulation of religious tracts, and the employment of secondary agents, as would, by the blessing of God, ultimately, and by patient labour, make a great and cheering impression. These are suggestions which we have felt it our duty to make ; and we are so seriously impressed with the whole case, as to hope that they will not be made in vain. Let us be willing to do our duty ; and we may leave direction in it, and success, to the God “ whose we are, and whom we serve.”

## REVIEW XXI.

*An Historical Defence of the Waldenses or Vaudois, Inhabitants of the Valleys of Piedmont. By Jean Rodolphe Peyran, late Pastor of Pomaret, and Moderator of the Waldensian Church. With an Introduction and Appendixes by the Rev. Thomas Sims, M.A., Domestic Chaplain to Her Grace the Duchess Dowager of Beaufort. 8vo. Pp. 534. 15s.*

“HELP, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, and the faithful are minished from the sons of men,” is a complaint and an appeal, which, in different ages, has ascended to heaven from the oppressed and persecuted servants of God. But though the faithful have often been minished and brought low, they have never wholly perished from the earth. “The Lord has removed men far away, and there has been a great forsaking in the midst of the land ;” yet how wonderfully has the Lord accomplished his own word : “But in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten, as a teil-tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves ; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof !”

One of the arrogant titles of the Church of Rome, is that of “catholic,” or universal. It involves a surrender of the truth of fact for Protestants to yield it this title through compliment or carelessness ; and it involves a refutation of one of her pretensions to be the only true church of Christ, for her to assume it. She was never a universal church. In the mystery of God’s permissive providence, she was allowed greatly to extend herself, and thus to fulfil the prophetic word, which makes the “falling away,” the apostasy, the influence and power of “the man of sin,” extensive and formidable ; but until the Churches of Africa were diminished by the Arian Goths, and swept away by the Saracenic invasion, they wrestled with her proud claim of supremacy. The Greek, Armenian,

and other Churches, equally nullify this claim of universality ; and if she will contend for this as an attribute of the true church of Christ, though the argument is itself worthless, out of her own mouth she proclaims herself to be a pretender. "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," was a behest as to this restless and aggressive ocean of spiritual dominion, deep, gloomy, and destructive as the sea of chaos ; and is illustrated, as to the resistance of the Papacy, not only by several of the larger branches of the Christian church, but by one which, in comparison of the power which assailed it, was insignificance itself, —a "thing of nought," and which could only have resisted, and maintained the conflict, by the special providence and interposition of God. The haughty tides of Papal domination were not only rolled back from the shores of the east, and the coasts of Africa, but were seen reflux from the entrances of the valleys of Piedmont ; and a few churches, descended from primitive times, true to the purity of the ancient faith, within almost the same sensible horizon which embraced Rome itself, have laughed at, and refuted, from age to age, even till now, the boasted pretence of Catholicism.

Mountains have always been sacred to liberty. When political liberty is in question, human causes, both moral and physical, may be adduced to account for the phenomenon ; but, in the case before us, we must ascend from man to God. The errors of the Church of Rome are too grateful to the bad nature of man, not to have found access to mountain-defended valleys, too seductive not to have made their inhabitants traitorous to their natural fastnesses, if nothing more than what is man were in operation. The spirit of religion, the spirit which could bear the cross of Christ with joy, in the most rugged shapes that diabolical ingenuity could impress upon it, was there. It was kindled and kept alive by special influence to fulfil the purposes of God, to accomplish prophecy, to give light to surrounding and even distant nations ; in a word, this sacred spot was guarded as the hope of the world, a granary of seed, small in extent, but precious for what it contained, from which all the truth that covers and enriches Protestant

nations was to spring: "Destroy it not," was the command of God,—secret, but restraining upon every hostile invader,—“for a blessing is in it.”

The Church of Rome did not all at once fall into her destructive corruptions. She illustrated thus the prophetic words of Scripture, that “the damnable heresies,” of which the Apostle speaks, should be brought in “privily;” and that they should increase more and more. Even one of her capital and most fatal, because practical, errors, the merit of good works, was first “privily” taught, and the corruption artfully spread among the people, to the waste of souls, before she dared officially to avow it, contradict herself, and show to all the world the fallacy of her claim to infallibility. In the ancient form of baptism, used by the Church of Rome, the candidate was asked, “*Credis non propriis meritis, sed passionis Domini nostri Jesu Christi virtute et merito, ad gloriam pervenire?*”\* to which he was required to answer, “*Credo.*”† And again, “*Credis quod Dominus noster Jesus Christus pro salute nostrâ mortuus sit? et quod ex propriis meritis vel alio modo nullus possit salvari, nisi in merito passionis ejus?*”‡ to which also the required answer was, “*Credo.*”|| This form was, however, forbidden by the *Indices Expurgatorii*, which were drawn up by order of the Council of Trent; and this infallible Council at once annulled the sacrifice of Christ, except as the ground of the grossest invention of superstition, and set the seal of its sanction upon this openly revived doctrine of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The Waldenses have, however, the honour of nobly opposing her earliest, as well as her later, departures from the faith. “It is proved by fact,” says Peyran, whose answer to the

\* “Dost thou believe that thou wilt attain to glory, not by thy own merits, but by the virtue and merit of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ?”

† “I do believe this.”

‡ “Dost thou believe that our Lord Jesus Christ died for our salvation? and that no man can be saved through his own merits, or by any other method than by the merit of Christ’s passion?”

|| “I do believe this.”

Romish Bishop of Pignerol, in 1818, is one of the tracts comprised in this volume, “and by the history of the different innovations of a well-known date, that the Vaudois do not form a new church ; they continue to be what they have ever been since the days of the Apostles. From the apostolic age until the seventh century, when no vital errors had as yet been introduced into the church, we made one with the universal church. Insensibly errors crept in elsewhere ; but the ancestors of the Vaudois would not admit them.” We do not think, with M. Peyran, that no vital errors had been introduced before the seventh century. Of the contrary fact too many sad proofs may be adduced ; but the north of Italy escaped many of them ; and they infested not, in any great degree, the churches of these celebrated valleys, and those which had been introduced were shaken off by that new appeal to the Scriptures, and to primitive testimony, which was excited by the noble stand made by Claude, Bishop of Turin, against the use of images, when the Roman Pontiff sanctioned the decrees of the second Council of Nice, which was held in 786. This illustrious man, a native of Spain, was called to this See, at a period when the faithful were struggling, in various parts of the Christian world, against the introduction of this idolatrous service, this setting up of the abomination of desolation in the holy place, and is claimed and revered by the Vaudois as one of their Pastors, and the defender of their ancient faith. With an intrepid zeal, and by preaching and writing, he purged his diocese of the superstitions which had been introduced into several parts of it ; and he found in the secluded valleys of the Vaudois, auxiliaries to his labours, and witnesses of the conformity of his views to early antiquity. His writings, which appear from Allix to have been chiefly commentaries on different books of Scripture, show the standard to which he appealed, and the weapons which he employed in his noble warfare. These are the arms under which Rome has ever succumbed, and the remembrance of the smart of her wounds received in former times from the sword of the Spirit, well enough explains her modern enmity to the translation and circulation of that word of

God, whose light at once lays open her darkest recesses of delusion, and the flashes of whose predictions break open the clouds of the future, and disclose the scenes of her approaching doom.

The writings of Claude have been suppressed by the Inquisition; and the Vaudois themselves, as appears from the *Nouvelles Lettres*, by Peyran, now know them only by collections of detached parts, which they have made from the writings of one of his antagonists, a Popish Bishop. Peyran has inserted these precious relics of remonstrance, and indignant fulmination of the word of God, against the supremacy of the Popes, pilgrimages to Rome, the invocation and intercession of saints, the worship of images, and the adoration of the cross. The language he uses is that of the Reformers in after-times; it is bold and unsparing as that of Luther; for it came from the same fulness of heart, the same jealousy for the Lord of Hosts, the same determined and uncompromising reference of every matter of controversy to the word of the living God. The whole strain is, however, one of greater simplicity; for the scholastic divinity had not yet spun its sophisms; and the labyrinth of errors had not arrived at its utmost complication. The mysteries of the mass, this early champion for religious truth had not to assail. With respect to his age, they were, as Peyran calls them, "*nouveaux mystères*;" at least, as established by authority. Transubstantiation was invented by the Monk Radbert in 831; and his notions stirred up no small controversy, till the fourth Council of Lateran, in 1215, pronounced them orthodox; and thus at once gave a new idol to the Christian church, and made an experiment upon human credulity, more bold than had ever been assayed by the wildering dreamings of the fanaticism of Paganism itself. Had the corruption of Rome reached to this height in the days of Claude, what would he have said and written? What "*si cet ancien hérésiarque des Alpes eut connu les nouveaux mystères de la messe? Mais la transubstantiation n'était pas encore née.*" (*Nouvelles Lettres*, page 33.)

The diocese of Turin, for a considerable time, continued to

feel the blessed effects of the testimony to the pure unadulterated truth, by the devoted and intrepid Claude ; but “in no district,” says the editor of these tracts of Peyran, “did the seeds of Christian truth flourish more luxuriantly than in the valleys” which have given their name to the Vaudois, or Waldenses ; “picturesque valleys at the eastern part of the Cottian Alps ;” “Alpine fastnesses, which nature seems to have reserved for the theatre of uncommon events.” The topographical sketches, given by Mr. Sims, of these localities, so sacred to truth, to heroic exploits, and to meek suffering,—the refuge, and once almost the solitary seat, of our common Christianity ; one of the wildernesses into which the church fled from the serpent and the dragon,—will be acceptable to our readers.

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But, though the Vaudois were finally confined within these narrow limits, “the word of God was not so bound.” They were the centre of religious knowledge in the dark ages ; “a bright taper that constantly shed rays that diffused the light of truth through several parts of Italy, the southern provinces of France, England, Bohemia, and other countries, until the welcome day-dawn of the Reformation appeared to increase, but not wholly to supersede it.” “We led the way,” said Peyran, in his conversation with Mr. Gilly.

“We stood in the front rank, and against us the first thunderbolts of Rome were fulminated. The baying of the bloodhounds of the Inquisition was heard in our valleys, before you knew its name. They hunted down some of our ancestors, and pursued others from glen to glen, and over rock and mountain, till they obliged them to take refuge in foreign countries. A few of these wanderers penetrated as far as Provence and Languedoc ; and from them were derived the Albigenes, or heretics of Albi. The province of Guienne afforded shelter to the persecuted Albigenes. Guienne was then in your possession. From an English province our doctrines found their way into England itself ; and your Wickliffe preached nothing more than what had been advanced by the Ministers of our



valleys, four hundred years before his time. Whence,' continued my aged informant, with increased animation, 'came your term Lollards, but from a Waldensian Pastor, named Walter Lollard, who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century? And the Walloons of the Low Countries were nothing more than a sect, whose name is easily found in the corruption of our own.' " (Pages 78, 79.)

In the language of the Papal Church, Claude of Turin was a heretic, and the Vaudois are heretics. But she combats heresy not with the "verity of holy writ," but with callous and sanguinary persecutions. Claude, had he lived in later times, would have shared the fate of his books; but on the followers of his faith the vengeance fell. Testimonies to their industry, humanity, and morality, even from their enemies, have been given from age to age. To their own Princes, though so often wasting and persecuting them, at the instigation of the Courts of Rome and France, or under the influence of their own sanguinary and superstitious devotion to Popery, they have ever been an example of loyalty so eminent, that this circumstance alone has sometimes warded off a threatened assault, or forced an acknowledgment from those ungrateful Princes who inflicted it. In all temporal matters, they preserved an unsubdued submission to the higher powers; in conscience they yielded nothing. This cancelled all their virtues in the estimation of the See of Rome; and as they were "counted as sheep for the slaughter," their butchers did not spare, when let loose upon them. That they had seasons of rest, can only be attributed to a special prohibition from God; that evils so tremendous were sometimes permitted, was at once to show "the patience of the saints," and fully to expose the character of "the man of sin," to a world which shall one day as greatly wonder at the wickedness and folly of its own devotedness to the "beast," as it has "wondered after him." The year 1475 brought on their first persecution; and the religion of the Apostles produced apostolic martyrs. In 1477 a Pope's Bull excited the fierceness of this persecution; and the Pope's Nuncio assembled twenty thousand men to attack and extirpate them.

In 1534 the prisons, convents, and castle of Pignerol, were filled with Vaudois prisoners who were given over to "the tender mercies" of the Inquisition. In 1560 their extermination was again attempted, under the sanction of the Inquisition. The bravery of the Vaudois, however, prevailed against superior forces; but not before they had endured great sufferings. Exterminating edicts and attacks were reiterated, more or less severe in their operation, till the year 1655, when "the Marquis di Pianezza marched a body of troops, amounting to fifteen thousand men, into the valley of Luzerne. The details of his cruel and perfidious conduct are of the most afflicting nature, marked as the massacres were by features of peculiar atrocity, when persons of either sex, and even the most helpless of the aged, as well as children of the tenderest years, became the victims of the inhuman soldiery." (Page 40.)

The Protestant States now, however, began to interpose in their behalf. Switzerland, the United Provinces, Sweden, the Elector Palatine, and others, but more especially England, under Cromwell, sent their special ambassadors, or requests, to Turin. Cromwell, with his characteristic promptness and zeal, appealed also to the King of France on their behalf, and ordered a collection for them in all the churches throughout the realm. The letters to the different courts were written by the poet Milton, who also composed, on occasion of this barbarous persecution, his noble and well-known sonnet:—

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones  
 Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;  
 Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
 When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones.  
 Forget not: in thy book record their groans,  
 Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,  
 Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that roll'd  
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans  
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they  
 To Heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow  
 O'er all the' Italian fields, where still doth sway  
 The triple tyrant; that from these may grow  
 A hundred fold, who, having learn'd thy way,  
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

The intercession of the Protestant powers obtained a respite from their sufferings for these poor objects of the ceaseless and unquenchable hatred of the Church of Rome, until the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV., who stirred up the Court of Turin to adopt measures similar to those taken by the French Monarch against his Protestant subjects, for the utter extirpation of the Vaudois. And now came the most terrible crisis of their history, when it was to be determined, whether this beautiful and long-watched-over and cared-for heritage of the Lord, which had been preserved, and raised again and again out of its desolations, was to be wholly and hopelessly wasted, or, by little less than miracle, again to spring up from its ruins. It was wasted ; terribly, and to all appearance hopelessly and totally wasted ; and yet, by little less than miracle, it was recovered, and replanted, and again it flourished.

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Nothing so truly sublime, so deeply touching, appears on the records of history, as this enterprise of Henri Arnaud, at once the Pastor and Commander of this intrepid and devoted band of eight hundred men. The unextinguishable love of mountaineers to their native hills ; the ardour of the noblest patriotism, elevated and sanctified by religion ; the just indignation of noble minds, stung by a sense of undeserved injury, yet unmixed with revenge, unstained by cruelty ; the spirit of the hero, exalted beyond all heroism by the devotion of martyrs ; the highest excitement resting firm on the most elevated principles ; the loftiness of a supernatural enthusiasm, undebased by the least mixture of fanaticism,—were all gloriously exemplified on this wonderful occasion. It would be a most interesting present to the British public, at a time when so much has been written on the Vaudois, to translate, from perhaps the only copy in the country, (that in the British Museum,) Arnaud's own account of this sublime episode in the Vaudois history, entitled, "*Histoire de la glorieuse Rentrée des Vaudois dans leur Vallées, où l'on voit une troupe de ces gens, qui n'a jamais été jusqu'à mille personnes, soutenir la guerre contre le Roi de France, et*

*contre S. A. R. le Duc de Savoie ; faire tête à leur armée de 22,000 hommes, s'ouvrir le passage par la Savoie, et par haut Dauphiné, battre plusieurs fois les ennemis, et, en fin, miraculeusement rentrer dans ses héritages, s'y maintenir les armes à la main, et y rétablir le culte de Dieu qui en avoit été interdit depuis trois ans et demi."* This title-page is at once an epitome of this wonderful history, and a developement of the principles which, under God's blessing, wrought the miracle. The history is, that eight hundred men, unused to warfare, having surmounted the most rugged and difficult Alpine passes, planted themselves, in spite of twenty-two thousand regular troops, in their own country ; maintained there the conflict with unconquerable spirit, never failed to beat back superior numbers, and won, by deeds of matchless valour, the land which gave them birth, and re-opened their own domiciles to all who wished to return ; having forced two sovereign powers to terms of concession. The very principles of this singular contest are all artlessly touched ; the enterprise was a re-entry ; the place was their own valleys ; the fond attraction was home, "*ses héritages ;*" and the crowning source of the heroic inspiration was the re-establishment of the worship of their God, amidst rocks and valleys which never had been silent with his pure and uncorrupted praises, till within three years and a half. Perhaps the only man who could have written that touching title-page, was the man who formed, animated, and accomplished the glorious enterprise.

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The consequence of these repeated persecutions and vexations has been to reduce the Vaudois to a state of great poverty ; and they have been, therefore, at different times, the objects of the well-placed benevolence of Protestant Sovereigns and states, as well as of distinguished individuals, for the maintenance of their Ministers, churches, schools, and poor. His Majesty's Ministers have restored the former annuity, arising from a collection made in the reign of His late Majesty, and which was interrupted by the conquests of Buonaparte ; His present Majesty has

recently presented them with a donation ; and, from the interest which has of late been excited in their behalf, they are not likely to want the means of keeping up their public institutions.

The volume before us is chiefly composed of tracts by Peyran, the late Moderator of the Vaudois churches, and contains an historical defence of this interesting people, and vindications of their opinions against the writings of their Popish adversaries. They embrace, therefore, along with historical information, some of the main points of the Romish controversy. They are the writings of a learned, an acute, and amiable man ; but would have been more generally acceptable had they been translated. This Mr. Sims promises to do in a second edition. The Notes and Illustrations, which the editor has appended, are sometimes useful and important ; though this part of the work is overloaded, and swelled out without reason.

To the zeal of these ancient churches, in the times previous to the Reformation, the *Nouvelles Lettres* bear an interesting testimony. They maintained constant intercourse with various parts of Europe ; they were a Missionary people, one third of their contributions being applied to the support of evangelical Missions. Their Ministers, after some years' labour among their flocks at home, went about preaching the pure Gospel wherever Providence opened their way. They had establishments in many large cities, where their disciples met together. When their Ministers were not sufficient to enter into the fields open to them, they sent out well-instructed laymen to spread their doctrine ; and the diligence of this people to learn the Scriptures, fitted many of them for their simple, and in those ages peculiarly glorious, vocation, to spread scriptural truth. The Popish writers bear witness to this. The very peasants at their labours taught one another in the Scriptures, and met in the evenings to teach and learn the sacred volume, when its copies, of course, were very rare. One learned by heart a portion of Scripture, and taught it to others ; and thus whole books of the Old, and the whole New Testament, were committed to memory by many who had

never seen a copy of either ; so “ precious,” in a double sense, “ was the word of God in those days.” These valleys were thus made at once the source from which the truth of God flowed forth into other lands ; and from the reputation they had for the purity and antiquity of their faith, they were resorted to, long before Luther appeared, by sincere inquirers after truth, disgusted with the thickening superstitions of the Romish Church, as to a school of evangelical instruction ; they were “ *la retraite, l’école, le séminaire, de ceux qui préfèrent la communion de Jésus Christ à celle du Pape.*”

Not only were these people employed by the providence of God, to preserve the light of truth during those dark ages, and to raise up faithful witnesses to it in other places, and thus to lead on the Reformation ; but the ancient creeds and doctrines of these faithful churches of Christ, connecting themselves as they do with primitive antiquity, are very important, not only as proving the novelty of Papal errors, but as exhibiting, on other points, “ the faith once delivered to the saints.” Their canon of Scripture is the same as that received by ourselves ; the same books being acknowledged as of divine inspiration, and the same list also being marked as apocryphal. Their confession of a Trinity of divine Persons in the unity of the Godhead ; their doctrines of the corruption of human nature, the atonement of Christ, and justification by faith, are also distinct, and conformable to those of the Reformed Churches ; or rather, the creed of the latter was, at the Reformation, conformed to theirs, both being drawn from the pure source of holy writ. The baptism of infants has also always been practised by them ; and, finally, we should look in vain, in the doctrines of these ancient churches, for any of the peculiarities of Calvin. In consequence of the education of their Ministers in Switzerland, some leaven of this doctrinal corruption of pure Christianity has been in recent times introduced ; but it is both modern and very partial. From the liberality lately exercised towards them, it is hoped they may be able to provide for the education of their own Ministers ; and that the spirit of vital piety may be still more full

excited among them. Even had they decayed in these latter times, they would have fulfilled a glorious vocation ; but they are probably designed to flourish with their ancient vigour, and to spread the truth, of which they have been the conservators, in the countries around them. Jesuitism still casts upon them an evil and sanguinary eye ; but they are perhaps safe from serious injury, though not from vexations.

## REVIEW XXII.

*Sermons, and Plans of Sermons, on many of the most Important Texts of Holy Scripture. By the late Rev. Joseph Benson. Three Volumes. 8vo. pp. 484, 526, 448. 1l. 16s.*

It will be in the recollection of our readers, that we are no friends to the publication of what are called Outlines or Skeletons of Sermons: But there is considerable difference to be made between such as are written for sale, and with the intention of making a market of the hopes and aspirations of those who as yet feel their need of assistance in their pulpit preparations; and the plans of sermons drawn up by eminent and highly-gifted Ministers from the fulness of their own minds, often under strong anxieties for the edification of their people,—which exhibit the character of their modes of thinking, and are imbued with some portion of their spirit. We view such publications less in the light of helps to young Preachers, in the arrangement of their sermons, than as interesting comments upon portions of holy writ; and as the key also, by which we may unlock the secret of those qualities which gave eminence and efficiency to the living ministry of those “lights of Israel.”

It is in this view, chiefly, that these relics of the studies and pulpit labours of the venerable Benson are to be regarded. They are mostly outlines of his sermons (many of them still distinctly remembered) on various passages of Scripture, from most of the books of the Old and New Testaments, and amount in number to two hundred and sixty-two. Several of them are short and unsatisfactory,—mere private helps to a memory familiar with the subject in its more complete form; a considerable number of them are regularly-digested plans of discourses, prepared with great care; and a few of them are still more at length, as if formed with reference



to publication on a subsequent revision. We have heard it remarked, that, as a whole, they are dry and disappointing; an impression which does not surprise us. Some of them are so, and might have been left out of the collection with advantage. That even the majority of them must appear so when perused in the full recollection of Mr. Benson's *vivâ voce* ministry, is inevitable. There are very few sermons, preached with energy, and into which any ardour has been thrown, that can produce the same effect upon the reader as upon the hearer; and the most popular sermons, using the term in its best sense,—the sermons which have made the deepest impression upon a congregation generally,—will, to all present at the delivery, read the worst; and in those who did not hear them, they will often excite surprise at the effect reported to have been produced. The occasion, often itself an exciting one, is wanting; as also the sympathy between the hearer and the speaker; the intonation of voice, which feeling turns to its own account by a thousand modulations and accents; and that gracious effusion of divine influence upon an audience, which frequently crowns, honours, and sanctions the living ministry. It was the remark of a great orator in the British senate, “If a speech read well, it is a bad speech;” meaning that the very qualities which commend a speech to a critical reader in his closet, would render it unfit, in a great measure, to produce effect in debate. And though sermons are not to be considered as speeches, nor to be spoken of, or delivered, too much under technical views, yet the remark is not inapplicable to them. In reading, we look for a rapid supply of successive thoughts; for continuous reasoning; for chastised imagery; for a concentrated style. Living addresses to a mixed auditory must be more flexible, and therefore more diffuse; less laboured, and therefore less exact. The thought is often not so clearly presented to the speaker in the first effort, and he makes a second, and a third; and yet with a variety of phrase, or some additional emphasis, which keeps the attention awake. What he loses in exactness, he gains in breadth and colouring; and his feelings often carry him into digressions, which hang loosely about

his sermons when printed, but into which his excited hearers often accompany him with edification and enthusiasm. The most finished of Mr. Benson's printed sermons, excellent as they are, bear but a feeble comparison with the same discourses delivered from the pulpit ; when, in spite of an untunable voice, and inartificial action, the united power of natural eloquence, earnestness, ardour of soul, and unction from on high, often gave tremendous power to denunciation ; and so fixed in the judgment the conviction of an enforced truth, generally accompanied by original and striking illustrations, as to leave no power of appeal from it. The mere plans of his sermons must therefore fall still farther below the standard which his reputation had fixed in the minds of most who have come to the perusal of these volumes. But when we are divested of this illusion, and regard them as what they are in reality, the cool arrangements of the leading thoughts of discourses, to be filled up as "utterance" might be vouchsafed to a Minister who always devoutly sought help from Heaven, neither will their publication be generally regretted, nor will they be perused by Preachers and private Christians without great advantage. To our minds they present a venerable record of the kind of preaching which God so greatly honoured in the revival of religion in this country in the last century ; and under this impression we shall indulge in a few general remarks.

The exactness and detail of the analysis of a text and subject which Mr. Benson adopted, is, we know, by some, considered as fitted rather to a former age than the present. But though we should allow that a few of the scholastic and systematic terms in which it was sometimes arranged, (though always without affectation,) may without injury be dispensed with, no Minister, whose object is the instruction of the people in the pure word of God, and in the meaning, relations, and application of its doctrines and duties, can, so to speak, work his subject without accurate method ; which, founded as it is upon truth and nature, is indispensable to the adequate communication of his meaning to the understandings of his hearers. If any Preacher can convey a true evangelical view

of "repentance towards God," without distributing the subject into particulars, and making several important and explanatory distinctions, he has found out a shorter way to the understandings of men, than has been before discovered by any true Divine, or real "Master in Israel." Method, visible and tangible, is imperatively bound upon him; unless he contents himself with playing the sentimentalist, and with spending his hour upon the circumstances of the case,—the "mournful tears," the "silent sighs," the "agonized breast," the "bowing head," and all the common-places of what is often called "fine" preaching; but what, in fact, is little better than the declamation of a school-boy; and which a congregation may hear, without a ray of true light to guide their steps in this incipient, and therefore most important, part of their religious course.

To some persons of modern notions, the number of topics introduced into most of these plans of sermons may also appear distracting. But this too is the result of a taste which to us appears no improvement. We do not indeed advocate the putting of a body of divinity into a discourse; and yet we had rather see the body itself there, than such scraps and parings as might leave one in doubt to what system of faith they belong. As a general rule, that of the ancient school cannot be improved in the regular administration of the word of God,—So much of the appointed method of salvation, as it is laid down in the Gospel, should be exhibited and enforced in every sermon, that no hearer may go away without an answer to the all-important question, "What must I do to be saved?" That this maxim imposes upon a Preacher the necessity of introducing several subjects into his discourse, is allowed; but this is not at all inconsistent with the established rule of "*unity*," as far as it is worth observing. If this rule mean, that one topic only should be introduced into a sermon, and that the art of the Preacher should be made to consist in the various lights in which that one topic is placed, and the various dresses with which it is arrayed, its strict observance will lead to feebleness and barrenness; and especially, if it be frequently attempted. The kaleidoscope, by the turning

of the same few pieces of glass, presents many beautiful views ; and yet, after all, it is but an ingenious toy. We know of no one truth of Christianity which is of any value, but as connected with many others ; and too much credit is perhaps given to the body of hearers, if they are supposed to supply that connexion in their own minds, which the Preacher does not suggest in his discourse. The predominance of one properly selected subject of discourse will be sufficient to preserve all useful unity ; and whilst that has the pre-eminence, like the “ Queen ” in the Psalms, “ Kings’ daughters ” are still to be “ among her honourable women,”—the bearers of her train, and the inseparable companions of her majesty.

It will be obvious to all who read these plans of sermons, that their venerable author was a *textuary* ; not as a mere citer of accumulated passages of Scripture, heaped up without discrimination of their import ; nor making use of them, as of a classical quotation, for ornamental illustration ; but in that sense in which only the maxim is true,—“ A good textuary is a good Divine.” His study of the Scriptures was not the casual application enforced by the preparation of a sermon on a given text ; but a habit of weighing and considering the Bible as a whole ; and the light obtained by this systematic study was always ready to present itself for the illustration of any passage selected for his regular ministrations. Every part of these volumes bears evidence of this. That every important doctrinal text had been critically considered, is sufficiently clear, even when no direct criticism appears in words. Nor was Mr. Benson led astray by that species of etymological verbiage, which so often seduces feebler critics from the argument and context of the sacred writer. The light of his learning was kept close to his feet, and not ostentatiously whirled in sparkling gyrations around his head ; and we see, by the firmness of his step, how practically it served him. His criticism is kept under the government of what, in the best sense, is understood by “ the analogy of faith ; ” which is but another name for the analogy of inspiration,—the interpreting of spiritual things by spiritual. In this respect these plans of sermons present

useful models. They may guard, by the example of so truly learned a man, against all ostentation of criticism ; and they show the advantage which every Preacher may derive, in his attempts to open the treasury of the word of God, from the legitimate use of learning ; or, at least, from availing himself of the helps afforded by orthodox and learned men, for the understanding of the Scriptures, with modesty, seriousness, and with a proper and guarded independence of judgment.

The inseparable union of doctrinal and experimental truth, in these rudiments of the powerful sermons preached by Mr. Benson, is another feature not to be overlooked. We notice it the rather, because this has hitherto constituted the special character of the Methodist ministry. To this its ancient and present success is, under God, to be attributed ; and from this we hope it will never depart. Practical preaching, separate from evangelical doctrine, was that under which our country fell into that deadly sleep from which Mr. Benson was one of many early and honoured instruments of awakening it. The preaching of the evangelical doctrines of the atonement and offices of Christ, separate from, or but loosely connected with, regeneration, and a holy walk with God, was that which drugged those who boasted of clearer light, into the infatuation of Antinomianism. The true announcement of the Gospel consists in the publication of SALVATION ; salvation purchased for us by Christ, and wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. Within the limits of these general truths, how many delightful, and life-giving, and life-preserving doctrines and promises lie ! Here is the treasury of the Christian Preacher ; here the magazine which furnishes his weapons ; here the grand field which opens for the hallowed efforts of true pulpit eloquence : Subjects such as never warmed the minds of heathen orators, and never elevated their thoughts, or their language,—the misery of man, the mercy of God, the facts and mysteries of our redemption, the process of the work of God in man, the richness of Christian promises, the variety and beauty of Christian virtues, the amplitude of possible obedience, the spotlessness of our attainable holiness, the noble works of faith, the un-

wearied labours of love, death, judgment, hell, heaven. Happy the Minister who knows how to explain these truths as they are taught in these volumes ; and to enforce them with a devoutness and ardour like that which characterized the living ministry of their apostolic author. He will stamp the petty embellishments of a petty oratory under his feet, and burn to share in the reward which we doubt not is now enjoyed by our venerable friend in the kingdom of God ; the reward of that wisdom which consists in “ turning many to righteousness.”

Concerning the rhetorical part of Mr. Benson’s sermons we may say a word. Excitement, which in some, like the warmth of spring, clothes every subject with verdure, and studs it with flowers, was in him, when the expository part of his discourse was surmounted, a more powerful movement. He, more truly than the ancient orator, might be said “ to thunder.” He was too vehement to linger on the construction of elaborate ornament. Of that quality which is usually called creative imagination, he had but a small share ; but in that which consists in the power of seizing illustrative analogies, his imagination was vigorous ; and he sometimes pursued them, with great effect, almost to the verge of allegory. In the use of ornament or analogies, every judicious speaker will consult his own natural genius ; but in this Mr. Benson was an example to all, that he made every thing to subserve his subject ; and of few men can it be more truly said, that he made his hearers fully forget himself, and think exclusively upon that “ message from God ” which he was employed to deliver. Long will his powerful and edifying ministry be remembered by the congregations which he was accustomed to address ; and through every future generation of Methodists his name will be revered, and associated with that of Wesley and Fletcher, as one of their most distinguished friends and fellow-labourers.

## REVIEW XXIII.

*The Works of James Arminius, D.D., formerly Professor of Divinity in the University of Leyden. Translated from the Latin. To which are added, Brandt's Life of the Author, with considerable Augmentations ; numerous Extracts from his Private Letters ; a copious and authentic Account of the Synod of Dort and its Proceedings ; and several interesting Notices of the Progress of his Theological Opinions in Great Britain and on the Continent. By James Nichols, Author of Calvinism and Arminianism Compared in their Principles and Tendency. Volume First. 8vo. Pp. 806.*

THE publication of the fourth Part of the Works of Arminius makes up the first volume of the writings of this illustrious Divine, and is an important step to the completion of a translation, long called for, both by the excellence of the pieces left to posterity by the great leader of the Dutch Remonstrants, and by that general misinformation which has prevailed in this country, as to his real sentiments. This thick and closely-printed volume, of more than eight hundred pages,—which abounds in notes and appendices, equally illustrative of the text of the author, of the eventful history of the times, and of much contemporary biography, and in which the translator discovers his characteristic industry, research, and reading,—contains the Life of Arminius, his Orations, the celebrated Declaration of his Sentiments on Predestination, &c., and a part of his Apology. Nearly one half of it is occupied with the Life ; and it is chiefly to this very valuable and interesting piece of biography that we shall at present confine our remarks and extracts ; as sufficient opportunity will be afforded us, by the publication of the subsequent volumes, to bring under the notice of our readers those theological tracts which the works at large comprise.

The publication of the writings of Arminius, in an English dress, is a valuable addition to the theological literature of the

country, and was long a desideratum. How many persons have ranked themselves in the Arminian school, who knew scarcely any thing of the views of the leader under whom they had ranged themselves, except that he was an anti-Calvinist ! How many Calvinists, on the other hand, either dealing out slanders invented by the enemies of this eminent man, handed down by writers of the Calvinistic school, from age to age, or speaking from mere prejudice and passion, have connected Arminianism with the Pelagian heresy ; and have involved in indiscriminate censure a system of which they knew nothing, with one which Arminius himself would have condemned as loudly as they ! We might be the more surprised at this, did we not know, that within living memory, Mr. Wesley,—the great reviver of some of the leading principles of Arminianism, as held by Arminius, the man who in modern times in this country, like Arminius in Holland, drove away, by sound scriptural argument, the clouds which the darkening metaphysics of Calvin had thrown upon the glory of the moral character of God, without impairing any of those great and vital truths of the Gospel which Calvin had connected with his system—was treated by the zealots for predestination in precisely the same manner, and made the subject of similar misrepresentations. “ Legalist,” “ Pharisee,” “ workmonger,” “ Pelagian,” were as frequent phrases of crimination with the English as with the Dutch Calvinists ; and were hurled against the Founder of Methodism with as much fury as against Arminius himself ; though, happily, political power was wanting to render them more than empty fulminations. Among this class of our fellow-Christians, whose reading and observation have been either limited by opportunity or by prejudice, the same notions of Arminius and of Mr. Wesley prevail to this day ; and none can scarcely be considered as orthodox in their opinions on original sin, the atonement, and justification, who have abjured the absolute decrees, and unconditional election.

There is another and a more interesting parallel between Mr. Wesley and the Leyden Professor, than their common share of calumny from predestinarian zealots. To Arminius was



assigned, by Providence, the task of arresting the march of Calvinism proper ; which, a little before his time, was making destructive progress among the Reformed Churches ; and of showing primitive Christianity in its great and practical doctrines of atonement, and personal regeneration, in connexion with God's universal love to man, in Christ Jesus our Lord. To Mr. Wesley, and his great coadjutor Mr. Fletcher, was assigned the work of reviving the doctrines of faith, regeneration, and divine influence, in a Church whose members had departed from its own doctrines into Pelagianism ; and, at the same time, of rescuing those doctrines from their unnatural alliance with Calvinism, into which, in this country, they had for a long period generally fallen ; thus preparing the minds of men for their better reception, when disconnected from an association, with which, by the ignorance of many, and the art of others, they had been almost identified. Arminius's labours, though not in their effects to be compared to those of Mr. Wesley, were of high importance. They preserved many of the Lutheran churches from the tide of Supralapsarianism, and its constant concomitant, Antinomianism : They moderated even Calvinism in many places, and gave better countenance and courage to the Sublapsarian scheme ; which, though logically, perhaps, not much to be preferred to that of Calvin, is at least not so revolting, and does not impose the same necessity upon men of cultivating that hardihood which glories in extremes, and laughs at moderation : They gave rise, incidentally, to a still milder modification of the doctrine of the decrees, known in this country by the name of Baxterianism, in which homage is, at least in words, paid to the justice, truth, and benevolence of God : They have also left on record in the beautiful, learned, eloquent, and, above all these, the scriptural system of theology, furnished by the writings of Arminius, how truly man may be proved totally and hereditarily corrupt, without converting him into a machine, or a devil ; how fully secured, in the scheme of the redemption of man by Jesus Christ, is the divine glory, without making the Almighty partial, wilful, and unjust ; how much the Spirit's operation in man is

enhanced and glorified by the doctrine of the freedom of the human will, in connexion with that of its assistance by divine grace, with how much lustre the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ shines, when offered to the assisted choice of all mankind, instead of being confined to the forced acceptance of a few; how the doctrine of election, when it is made conditional on faith foreseen, harmonizes with the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of God, among a race of beings to all of whom faith was made possible; and how reprobation harmonizes with justice, when it has a reason, not in arbitrary will, the sovereignty of a Pasha, but in the principles of a righteous government. Such were the effects of the labours of Arminius. Mr. Wesley was a more active man. Arminius had the Professor's chair, Mr. Wesley the pulpit. Arminius was conducted to the retirement of a College, from the parish church; Mr. Wesley escaped from the quiet of academic groves, into "the field, the world." The adjustment of doctrine, and the balancing of controversies, was the duty of the Professor of systematic theology, in a controversial age: Mr. Wesley was a Preacher, eminently and emphatically so; an evangelist with a large commission, whose first business was with the hearts of men, and with the practical application of the fundamental truths of the New Testament. It was the unhappy bearing of Calvinism, in its Antinomian form, upon vital and practical religion, which he observed in the course of his labours; the religious death that it spread through whole districts in this country; and its withering influence upon the revived verdure, which, by the blessing of God, had appeared in others, that chiefly rendered Mr. Wesley a controversialist. When he took up the pen, he pursued the error through all its devious windings; and having left that part of his calling to be completed by Mr. Fletcher, he pursued his course in publishing God's everlasting universal love to man; offering a free and full salvation, through the mercy of God in Christ, to all mankind; and he left, in tens of thousands of living witnesses, the lofty proof, that the vital, quickening, saving energy of Christianity, was not in the doctrines of grace, so called, when associated with the dogmas

of the Genevan divinity ; but that they could operate in the full play of power and subduing influence, when those dogmas were not only disregarded, but branded as gross and culpable corruptions of the Gospel. It is not, surely, for Calvinism to say, after such a demonstration, as it has often done, with no little complacency, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these."

Arminius and the Founder of Methodism were strikingly alike in the charity which they cultivated towards those whose views they most firmly opposed ; and we wish to imitate, and to be examples of, the same spirit. We are certainly not disposed to place the points which distinguish the Arminian from the Calvinistic system, in any of its modifications, in the rank of fundamentals ; and the fact of conversions from sin to holiness, and from death to life, being wrought by God's blessing upon the labours of Divines and Preachers of each class, shows that he employs that truth in which they agree, rather than the points in which they differ, as the instrument of conveying salvation to man. The manner and the force of that common truth will, however, often derive its emphasis, and effectual mode of statement, from the other truths in the system with which it is connected ; and that emphasis, mode, or peculiar aspect, may be among those means which are employed for good by the Holy Spirit. For this and many other reasons, we do not think the differences, therefore, unimportant ; and though we speak it in perfect kindness, and on the sole principle of giving our testimony to the truth, as far as we have full persuasion of what is truth, we regard Calvinism as a very mischievous corruption of Christianity ; and must, therefore, honour such men as Arminius, and all others who, like him, could clearly discriminate between Calvinism and the Gospel ; and who, instead of injuring the latter in the contest, like many, have presented it more bright and glorious, more in the freshness and splendour of its first burst upon our world, by dissipating the vapours which scholastic theology threw around it in the middle ages, and the sophistries of that corrupt pagan philosophy which imbued the early thoughts of Augustine, and which he brought into the Christian church.

Calvinism, we know, is often complimented with having been the depository of the great truths of vital Christianity ; but, were that the fact, it would not follow, that Calvinism is not a corruption ; or, that it is really inimical to the full meaning and developement of great truths themselves. But the fact itself may be questioned. Calvinism has been seen in connexion with such truths ; but it has no claim to be considered their depository in any age. As to antiquity, Dr. Heylin has justly observed, that “ if Tertullian’s rule be good, that those opinions have most truth which have most authentic antiquity, (*id verum est, quod primum*, as his own words are,) the truth must certainly run most clearly in that part of the controversy which has least in it of the Zuinglian or Calvinian doctrines.” We have in the writings of the earliest Fathers a frequent recurrence of the term “ elect,” and frequent mention of predestination, as in the New Testament ; but the election spoken of by all was conditional, and, therefore, just the reverse of that of Calvin. All men, without exception, are considered by them as included in the mercies of the new covenant. Into the Roman and Greek Churches more restricted views of the extent of Christ’s death were at length introduced ; but they were rather tolerated than acknowledged ; and were regarded as exceptions from the common doctrine, introduced and maintained by the influence of the names of Augustine and some of the Schoolmen ; whose services to the cause of error, in other respects, commended them highly to the Romish Church in particular ; for she owed to St. Augustine the doctrine of the lawfulness of persecution, in matters of religion ; and to the Schoolmen, if not the profitable doctrine, yet the philosophic defence, of transubstantiation. In both Churches, however, the views of Augustine were entertained only by the minority, and formed no barrier among any against that common corruption of doctrine which in each of them prevailed more and more in every age. But neither were the opinions of St. Augustine, when deduced from his writings collated with each other, nor yet those of Aquinas, Scotus, and others of the leading Schoolmen, the opinions which were afterwards taught by Calvin, and

which prevailed so largely in Holland, and in several other parts of Protestant Christendom. They were in accordance rather with the system which has been called Baxterian in this country, or with the mildest form of Sublapsarianism. They made the number of the elect to be fixed and determinate; but allowed that God gave to the non-elect sufficient aid for their salvation, though none of them would be saved. This doctrine, modified as it was with these saving clauses, was, however, firmly opposed in that day; it was the cause of warm disputes between the Dominicans and Franciscans in the Romish Church; and St. Augustine himself was not spared. He was charged with introducing opinions not heard of in the church before his time; his notions on these subjects were branded as extravagances, into which his headlong mind, which was always prone to passionate extremes, was transported in his contest with Pelagius. Luther brought the dogmas of Augustine into the Reformation; but his views moderated in the latter part of his life. Melancthon was the advocate of conditional election; in the belief of which many of the Lutheran churches settled. Calvin's scheme had no prototype at all, except in the profane dreams of those occasionally bold and hardy metaphysical theologians and heretics, who made God the author of sin, but who were put down by universal abhorrence, throughout the churches of Christ in primitive times. He imposed on Adam a necessity of falling; and made it to be the very end of the creation of the human race, that God might show his mercy, or rather his mere will, in electing some of them, without respect to their faith or obedience, unto eternal life; and his justice, in rejecting all the rest, and punishing them for unavoidable transgressions. This was the abominable dogma which was taught by Calvin and Beza in Geneva; and, though boldly and well opposed by the learned and persecuted Castellio, in the same city, spread wherever the discipline of the Genevan Church prevailed, in France, Scotland, among the Presbyterians of England; and, in many places, as in part of Holland, it displaced Lutheranism, which the United Provinces had embraced at the commencement of the Reformation. But in none of the ages referred

to, was this theory, in any sense, as has been pretended, an exclusive depository of the vital and essential doctrines of salvation; nor had the elder and more mitigated theories of Augustine and the Schoolmen that honour. The writings of the Fathers before Augustine are surely as rich a treasure of evangelical truth, as those of the Bishop of Hippo; and that with more of the simplicity of the Gospel, and fewer inconsistencies. The Schoolmen will not be resorted to, as scribes "well-instructed in the kingdom of God;" the Dominicans were not more free from the doctrine of merit, and the efficacy of sacraments, *per se*, than the Franciscans; Melancthon had views as clear of the work of God in the soul as Luther; the Lutheran Church held the leading doctrines of personal religion and salvation, as fully and consistently as the Genevan Churches; and the same blessed truths are as fully embodied in the Melancthonian Liturgy of the Church of England, as in the purely Calvinistic formularies of the Church of Scotland; and with this advantage, that, without the least tendency to Pelagianism, they are there preserved from the desecration of the Antinomian heresy.

We know no period in the church, when evangelical truth was indebted to Calvinism for its preservation; none in which that truth was not accessible without this impure mixture; and none where it has not done practical mischief, just in proportion as it has been preached. It has only proved innocuous, when, as in the present day, its advocates have been content generally to keep it out of the public sight, and to preach and write without adverting to it.

But it is time for us to approach the Life of Arminius, presented to us in this volume. Of this, Mr. Nichols has made the Oration of Bertius, delivered in the great hall of the University of Leyden, after the celebration of Arminius's obsequies, the basis; and by adding numerous appendices illustrative of the events, characters, and circumstances adverted to in the narrative, has given us a most copious and lively view, not only of the life, but of the times, of a man whose name some of the greatest geniuses, and most profound scholars, were, immediately upon his death, not ashamed to

bear ; and from whose writings, few comparatively as they are, the most powerful arguments are to be drawn against the doctrine which, as to the greater part of the human race, makes the cross of Christ of none effect, and for the simplicity of the Gospel, gives us only the subtle and perplexing sophistries of the schools. It was no small praise to Arminius, that he was accounted a great man, in an age of great men ; in an age, too, when Holland, his country, so seldom of late years associated with literature, either sacred or profane, led the opinions of mankind, in criticism, theology, and jurisprudence.

The theological education of Arminius was, however, Calvinistic ; for after he had so distinguished himself at the University of Leyden as to awaken the highest expectations of his future eminence, he was sent in 1582, at the sole expense of the Senate of Amsterdam, for his further improvement, to the University of Geneva ; where the celebrated Beza taught the system of his master, Calvin, with great learning, and most influential eloquence ; and whom Arminius so much admired, that he resolved, at least as far as manner was concerned, to take him for his model. Upon the close of his highly creditable academic course, and his entrance on the ministry, he appears to have been Calvinistically orthodox, notwithstanding the many proofs he had given of an independent mind in the pursuit of truth. As a Preacher, he attained great eminence, and powerfully commanded attention, for the eloquence, solidity, and learning of his discourses ; which were also characterized by the two indispensable qualifications of good preaching,—simplicity of style, and earnestness of manner. The following is Bertius's eulogy on his pulpit excellences :—

“There was in him a certain incredible gravity, softened down by a cheerful amenity ; his voice was rather weak, yet sweet, harmonious, and piercing ; and his powers of persuasion were most admirable. If any subject was to be displayed to great effect, in all its native adorning, Arminius disposed of it in such a manner as in no instance to overstep the truth. If any doctrine was to be taught, he enforced it with perspicuity ; and if he had to discuss any topic in an argumenta-

tive style, he treated it with clearness. The melodious flexibility of his voice could be so accommodated to different subjects and occasions, as to seem to have its origin in them, and to receive from them the tone and impression which it ought then to take. He disdained to employ any rhetorical flourishes, and made no use of the honeyed sweets collected for this purpose from the Greeks ; either because his nature was abhorrent to such accompaniments, or because he thought it a degradation to the majesty of divine things, to admit into the discussion of them these false ornaments and adscititious finery, when naked truth is of itself sufficient for its own defence. Yet the persuasion which he employed was rendered so efficacious, by the force and weight of his arguments, the importance of his sentiments, and by the authority of the scriptures which he adduced, that no man ever listened to him who did not confess himself to be greatly moved. Many people, therefore, styled him ‘the file of truth ;’ some called him ‘a touchstone for the trial of men of genius,’ and others ‘a razor to cut down the budding errors of the age ;’ and it was generally believed that nothing could be discovered in religion or sacred theology which Arminius had not found out and understood. Even the Ministers and Preachers of that city, the whole of them learned and eloquent men, rendered homage to his erudition, by ingenuously acknowledging that every time when they enjoyed the privilege of sitting under his ministry they derived the greatest profit from his sermons.”

It is probable, however, that Arminius had hitherto implicitly followed his early Calvinistic tutors, and that he had scarcely thought, whilst at Geneva, of questioning the authority of Beza. On the other hand, it is equally probable, that the Calvinian system, in those points in which it differed from Lutheranism and the Sublapsarianism which then largely prevailed in Holland, had been but generally and vaguely admitted into his mind, and more in the form of prejudice, than of discriminating belief. This may be inferred both from circumstances and from his years ; his youth, and the early period of his manhood, having been abundantly exercised with those copious and operose studies, by which alone



men in those days were conducted to academic fame and learned eminence. He was lost to the cause of Genevan predestination, by his being sought after, on account of his talents, to become a champion for it.

The Low Countries were far from being settled in religious opinions. There were Divines, and Pastors, and many Civilians of great influence, who followed Melancthon's opinions, and those of the moderate Lutherans : Others, again, embraced the Sublapsarian scheme of Sohnius of Heidelberg, and many other Protestant Divines ; which was the sentiment also of Cardinal Bellarmine. On these points there had been allowed, previous to the time of Arminius, much charitable liberty of opinion in Holland. This appears to have been trenched upon, and narrowed, just in proportion as the Genevan doctrine grew stronger and more prevalent, and brought with it its almost uniform concomitants of bigotry and violence. On this subject Bertius, in his Oration, observes :—

“ Our churches formerly enjoyed the privilege (which is continued to this day in many places) of being always permitted to embrace any one of the several sentiments that have been published on this controversy, which has never yet been decided by the judgment of any ancient synod or council ; they were also allowed to elect a teacher that entertained sentiments similar to their own ; and both these privileges they could exercise without giving offence to any person. As an instance of this, omitting all others, I may adduce Doctor John Holmanus Secundus, who, at the pressing instance, and by the mature advice, of profound Divines, and particularly of their Lordships the Curators, received a call to this University, (after Pezelius, Mollerus, and some others, had been in vain solicited to accept of it,) and publicly taught in the very place in which I am now standing ; yet we all know, that he had embraced the doctrine of Hemmingius respecting predestination, and was one of its warmest advocates.”

The circumstance which led Arminius to a careful examination of the arguments on both sides was, his being requested to answer a Sublapsarian pamphlet, written against the notions

of Calvin and Beza, and which the Calvinian party were very anxious to have confuted. He became "a convert to the very opinions he had been requested to combat and refute;" and then, pursuing his inquiries, with long and severe patience, into the whole controversy, he was led to "those opinions which he finally embraced, and held to the close of life;" and which, as to predestination, were the same as were "held and vindicated by the very learned Melancthon, Nicholas Hemmingius, and many other Divines" of the Reformation.

So far as the mind of Arminius was settled in the truth, he thought it his duty to avow it; and yet in the pulpit he appears most judiciously to have avoided the controversial mode, and in expounding the word of God preferred giving his own view of its meaning, and supporting it by the requisite arguments, to combating directly those of others. The first public announcement of his change of views, on points usually agreed upon among Calvinists, was in his exposition of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; where he openly taught and established this proposition:—

"St. Paul does not in this passage speak of himself, in reference to what he then was, neither does he allude to a man who is living under the grace of the Gospel; but he personifies the character of one who was placed under the law, on whom the law of Moses had discharged its office, in whom true contrition on account of sin had been effected by the aid of the Holy Spirit, and who, being experimentally convinced of the weakness of the law and its incompetency to procure salvation, was seeking a deliverer; and although such a person could not be called regenerate, yet he was in the very threshold of regeneration."

The troubles and persecutions of Arminius may be said to have commenced from this hour. A few, a very few Calvinists, indeed, have been found, at different times, who have, in this exposition, agreed with Arminius, and with many older Divines, up to the first ages, whom Arminius followed; but, generally, woe to the man among them who has ever doubted of that right godly, wholesome, and comfortable doctrine, that a regenerate chosen vessel is, nevertheless, "carnal, sold

under sin ;” and that, though “ with the mind he serves the law of God,” yet, that it is no prejudice to his regenerate character, that “ with the flesh” he should still “ serve the law of sin.” In later times, poor Smith, the author of “ the Carnal Man’s Character,” moved the wrathful orthodoxy of all Scotland against him, because, good Calvinist even as he remained on the subject of the decrees, he disturbed the comfort of the elect, by proving that St. Paul’s supposed believer, in this chapter, was, in reality, a carnal man ; and that, had he possessed saving faith, he would have had dominion over sin, and not remained its slave. This, it seems, has all along been a tender point ; for although Arminius defended himself against his accusers, who wished to find a real heresy in his sentiments, and silenced them by his appeals to Scripture and antiquity, yet his exposition of the seventh of Romans was that great doctrinal offence which appears to have rankled for years in the morose and embittered mind of Gomarus, who long afterwards exerted himself to the utmost to obstruct his elevation to the Professor’s chair at Leyden, and urged this as the proof of his heretical pravity. The downright rancour with which the doctrine of a believer’s deliverance from sin has often been assailed by people of this school, and which is not without frequent examples in the present day, is a curious fact in the history of theological opinions.

Arminius was soon called to make a further disclosure of his sentiments, in his exposition of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans ; but amidst all the discussions which were excited, he appears to have been an example of great temper, meekness, and charity ; and not merely an able expounder of God’s word, but a Pastor of exemplary diligence, fidelity, and sympathy. To the Calvinistic party he was, however, sufficiently obnoxious ; and but for the weight of his talents, his power in disputation, and, above all, the character which he had established with the leading men of the state, he would have suffered personally, what so many of his followers shortly after his death were called to suffer, for the like testimony to the universal love of God in Christ to his fallen

creatures. To his introduction to the theological chair at Leyden, the Calvinists, with Gomarus at their head, made a violent but fruitless opposition. The victory was, indeed, most honourable to the character and reputation of Arminius. He was bound not to leave the service of the church in Amsterdam, without consent of the Senate. This was with great difficulty obtained.

“Various,” says Bertius, “were the public deliberations at this juncture; and nothing that could be done was left unattempted. The most noble Dousa and D. Neostadius, two of the Curators of our University, with that most honourable man Nicholas Zeystius, the Syndic of our city, proceeded in the public name to Amsterdam. To this commission were also appointed, at the same time, by the most illustrious the Prince of Orange, John Uitenbogardt, Minister of the church at the Hague, and Nicholas Cromhoutius, of the supreme court. All these great men tried, by various means, to prevail with the discreet and wise Senate of that city, and with the Presbytery of Ministers and Elders, and incite them to a compliance with the public wishes. It was at length, with the utmost difficulty, obtained, after great assiduity, many entreaties, and at the intercession of the most illustrious Prince himself, that Arminius should have leave to depart, and to perform the important services which this University demanded from a Professor of Divinity.”

Arminius had right views of the duties of a Theological Professor, and of the only safe and truly satisfactory method in which sacred science can be studied,—by the examination of the sacred Scriptures, in the first place, as the fountain of truth; and the study of biblical literature, as necessary to their true exposition. To the testimony of Bertius on this particular Mr. Nichols has added that of the younger Brandt.

“His object was,” says Bertius, “that the search for religion might be commenced in the Scriptures;—not that religion which is contained in altercation and naked speculations, and is only calculated to feed their understandings; but that religion which breathes forth charity, which follows

after the truth that is according to godliness, by which young men learn to 'flee youthful lusts,' and by which, after they have completely overcome the allurements of the flesh, they are taught to avoid 'the pollutions that are in the world,' and to do and suffer those things which distinguish a Christian from a Heathen. He repeatedly inculcated on their minds that doctrine which our Saviour has expressed in these words : 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

The same character is given of his method of teaching divinity, by Brandt :—

"But since, in this his entrance into office, he perceived with sufficient clearness, that the minds of the youthful students were involved in the intricacies of many useless speculations, he accounted it one of his first duties to retrench, as far as possible, the thorny questions and the immense mass of scholastic assertions, and to inculcate on his pupils that divine wisdom, which, when sought for in its purest sources, the holy Scriptures, would alone be competent to render human life useful and happy. This was the grand object at which he aimed from his earliest entrance into the University, and to the accomplishment of which he endeavoured to direct both his public and private labours."

To us this is a circumstance which enhances, in no small degree, the judgment and piety of Arminius. He could not but perceive, that Calvinism, and various other errors, had made their first approach, and still maintained themselves, by metaphysical subtleties ; and that, although by similar subtleties they might be matched and refuted, yet the difficulty of conveying, and even expressing, a definite meaning, where things purely spiritual must necessarily be spoken of in language drawn from material and sensible sources, led as necessarily to endless disputations and divisions. No man, in his day, was better able to wield this kind of weapon, as occasionally his adversaries proved, when he was called to expose and refute their sophisms ; but he seems to have felt that conviction of the truth, when it is effected by the subtlety of reason,

is infinitely inferior to that conviction which is produced by the direct testimony of God ; and that it is a great part of the Christian's character to cultivate submission to the authority of the Scriptures, and to make his own faith, and that of others, to stand, not " in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God."

That this was the leading character of the teaching of this eminent Professor, is evident from what remains of his academical labours ; but he was not allowed to pursue this course undisturbed and undiverted. The students were, in consequence, involved in thorny disputations ; and being marshalled at an early period of life in opposing parties, they imbibed an *esprit de corps*, to which the violence, and extremes of conduct and doctrine, on both sides, in subsequent years, are in no small degree to be attributed. Gomarus was, unhappily, the senior Theological Professor ; and his resistance to Arminius's appointment did not dispose him to the most friendly co-operation with him. He appears to have been also of a jealous and envious temperament, which the celebrity of Arminius was not calculated to assuage ; and, probably, through prejudice and a dogmatical temper, was disposed to think the sentiments of Arminius distant from his own on some vital points, as well as on the peculiarities of Calvinism. At all events, since this gruff Professor of the Genevan theology openly contended, that unconditional election, and unprovoked reprobation, were to be placed among the fundamentals of religion, it was impossible that, in theology at least, Leyden should be distinguished by its harmony. The expositions of Scripture given by Arminius were watched, for the purpose of being excepted against, and his sentiments were often mischievously misrepresented. Gomarus held a disputation on certain theses respecting predestination, in open opposition to the views on this subject which were then inculcated by Arminius. These theses were in turn examined and refuted by Arminius, among his own students ; and the agitation produced in the University spread into the town, and through the provinces. The matters in dispute began to make their way even into the pulpits ; and the heresies of

Arminius, dressed up in the odious garb of Pelagianism, began to alarm the good Calvinists every where for their faith, and the purity of one of their seats of learning. Of the discussions and troubles which followed, the reader will find ample information in the volume before us. Throughout the whole, the united firmness and meekness of this reproached man appear in striking and instructive aspects; and gave to him, and to the truths he defended, the greater weight and influence among the body of thinking and considerate men. So far from spurning, he courted every opportunity of explanation and discussion, and in his famous Declaration of his Opinions, before the States of Holland, he at once put all the calumnies of his enemies to flight, and left to the world, as Mr. Wesley has well observed, “as manly and rational a system of divinity, as any age or nation has produced.”

Among other reproaches, Arminius did not escape that of being a Papist; though he rightly thought, extensive as his charity was to all other denominations of Christians, that from that society in which all Christians who agree in fundamental doctrines ought to live in harmony and love, Papists were necessarily excluded, both by their idolatry and by their persecuting spirit. It is curious that this too was a long-continued and popular slander on the Founder of Methodism; and also, that, as in Arminius's day, the Genevan bigots of our own country publicly consigned Mr. Wesley to perdition. The last sickness of the Leyden Professor, which was very heavy and protracted, was ascribed to a divine penal visitation; and nothing but eternal fire was thought sufficient to expiate his crimes against Dutch orthodoxy, as interpreted by Gomarus. So much do our spirits need to be watched and checked, and so thankful may we now be, that a bigotry so barbarous and savage is, in our day, confined to few persons, who, neither as men nor Ministers, have character or influence. In his last sufferings, however, Arminius possessed his soul in eminent patience; and his end was peace.

“Worn down,” says Bertius, “and fatigued with all this accumulation of maladies, Arminius still preserved his usual firmness of mind and placidity of temper. During the whole

of his indisposition, he abated nothing of his cheerful converse and pleasing manners ; he continued to show his accustomed hilarity of countenance, and to manifest the same courteous and gentle disposition, while he ceased not to approach to God with most ardent prayers for himself and for the concord of the church of Christ. How frequent and how fervent were the ejaculations which he breathed forth to Jesus Christ his Lord, under the pressure of his multiplied pains and distempers ! What heavenly joys did he promise to himself ! With what persevering faith did he expect and long for the last day which he would be permitted to spend upon earth ! If his brethren knelt down to prayer in his presence, and if he were prevented from uniting with them in devotion on account of the strong pains which at that instant assailed him, he often desired them to wait till he had recovered from the paroxysm and regained his composure, that he might with them discharge this solemn and fraternal duty."

To this Brandt adds,—

" To those who stood around his death-bed he frequently repeated the twentieth and twenty-first verses of the thirteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Arminius recited this passage of the sacred writer with such ardency of mind, and fervour of spirit, as fixed it ever afterwards deeply in the memory, and imprinted it on the mind, of the Rev. Bartholomew Prevost ; a pupil worthy of such a master, and afterwards Pastor of the Remonstrant church at Amsterdam."

We have thus given a sketch of the public life of Arminius, and introduced the first volume of his translated Works to the notice of our readers. They will, we hope, be speedily completed by the excellent translator, whose talents for this service are beyond those of a mere scholar, capable of a faithful transference of his author into another tongue. Mr. Nichols adds to this, a comprehensive knowledge of the history of those times, and of the different churches and leading characters from the Reformation to the present day. It is this which makes his Notes and Illustrations so instructive, and often so entertaining ; whilst his accurate acquaintance with evangelical theology has, in many instances, enabled him to guard the



truth not only against Calvinism on the one hand, but against that Semi-Pelagianism on the other, which has so often endeavoured to shelter itself under the authority of the system taught by Arminius. As Arminius was so largely referred to by the late Mr. Scott, in his *Controversy on Calvinism*, Mr. Nichols's notes on that author will be consulted with great advantage.

To the theology of Arminius himself, we shall have other opportunities of adverting; and we now only say, generally, that though in some points we differ from this eminent Doctor, and though in others he appears not fully to have determined his own judgment, yet that the publication of his *Works* is greatly calculated to promote accurate theological knowledge on those subjects which he intended more fully to discuss; and that all he writes is imbued with a spirit of seriousness and piety.

In conclusion we remark, that this is a volume which we can conscientiously recommend to our readers, as worthy of their purchase and perusal; and we trust that sufficient encouragement will be given to the translator, by the Christian public, to induce him to proceed with vigour in the arduous task which he has commenced with such ability.

## REVIEW XXIV.

*Sacred Dissertations on what is commonly called the Apostles' Creed.*  
*By Herman Witsius, D.D., Professor of Divinity in the Universi-*  
*ties of Franeker, Utrecht, and Leyden. Translated from the*  
*Latin, and followed with Notes, critical and explanatory, by*  
*Donald Fraser, Minister of the Gospel, Kennoway. 8vo. 2 Vols.*  
*Pp. 1194. £1. 2s. Glasgow. 1823.*

THE antiquity of that compendium of Christian doctrine, on which these Dissertations are written, and the veneration in which it has been held in the church of Christ, are circumstances which deservedly entitle it to be publicly pronounced from time to time in our assemblies, as containing the great outline of the faith we profess, and to be committed to the memory of our children, for the perpetuation of that faith from age to age. Important explanations of this Creed have been written at different periods ; not because in itself it is deficient in clearness or simplicity, but for the purpose of exhibiting its accordance with the Scriptures, and of carrying out the mind of the adult and inquiring Christian into the lengths and breadths of its doctrines, and into the relation of those facts which it so admirably embodies to our faith, practice, and hope. Our own country and language have produced some of these expositions, excelled by none in learning, power, and usefulness ; and yet, so various are the methods in which minds, replete with theological knowledge, and possessing different talents of illustration, pour out their treasures on subjects closely connected with the best interests of men, that all standard works of this kind may be read with edification ; and their interest will continue as long as the truths which they explain and defend retain their hold on the human heart. Were the work before us less excellent than it is, we should by no means regard its translation as intrusive or unnecessary.

Much inapplicable and unbecoming censure has been bestowed upon Christian churches for the use of Creeds and Confessions of Faith. It is a specious observation, that a profession of faith in the Scriptures is sufficient to entitle any person to initiation into the church by baptism, and to continued communion with it. Against the loose and crude suggestions of modern times we may, however, set the wisdom and discipline of the primitive churches, who required, in order to the baptism of adult persons, a profession of faith in "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." That profession was conveyed in few words, it is true; but those words were so used as to import the character and offices of each divine Person, as understood among the faithful, (among whom great difference of opinion on fundamental points had not then crept in,) and as they had been explained to the candidates in their catechetical preparation. Christians were, in those first and purest times, required to be distinguished by their faith as well as by their practice; and the sense in which they took the words of Scripture was demanded of them, as well as a profession of their belief in the authority of its letter. As errors, grounding themselves on perverse expositions of holy writ, were multiplied, the true church of Christ enlarged the clauses of its ancient Creeds, by a declaration of the Scripture doctrine on the controverted points; and new tests were added for the detection and the exclusion of heresies; especially on those articles to which the subtlety of unhumiliated minds, and the bewildering habit of philosophising, drawn from the heathen schools, most readily directed themselves. Of this kind were the mode of the divine existence, the Persons of the holy Trinity, and the union of natures in the Son. The Creed called "the Apostles'" was a brief expansion of the first still more compendious confession of faith. The Nicene, probably as old as the Apostles' Creed, in its present form, is a noble declaration of the faith of the primitive church on the Godhead and divine Sonship of Christ, and the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, as well as on other less-controverted doctrines. And the Athanasian Creed, though not composed by that distinguished champion of the

true and primitive faith respecting the Trinity in Unity, whose name it bears, was another of those compendious means of embodying the import of Scripture, on these vital subjects. by which the evasions and equivocations of men of corrupt minds were detected and guarded against. We owe it, under God, to these declarations of the faith of the early churches, that a sense of the importance of these grand truths of our religion has been maintained against latitudinarianism in matters of doctrine; they have been the rallying-points for the confessors of the mystery of God; they have kept human reason in its proper subjection to the authority of the divine oracles; they have rendered professions of faith more honest and explicit; they have brought heresy out of its subterfuges; and, by obliging it to contend openly, they have deprived it of half its danger.

The first object of Creeds was to distinguish the church from the world, from Jews and Pagans. In this view, the earliest formularies of this kind contained simply the leading doctrines and facts of the Christian religion; and it was only necessary that they should be generally and briefly expressed; the difference lying not in the exposition, but in the *credenda*, the “things to be believed” themselves. The second object was to distinguish between persons professing the Christian faith; between those who retained the apostolic doctrine, and those who, through unauthorized speculations, had departed from it, and fallen into different errors on important points. Creeds of this kind, therefore, contained the fundamental truths, with brief expositions, declaratory of the sense in which they were to be understood, in order to the full reception of the doctrine of Scripture respecting them. The Apostles' Creed is of the first class; the Nicene and Athanasian, of the second; the Nicene, especially, having the most solemn sanction of the congregated churches of Christ. Other Creeds and Confessions have been, at later periods, adopted by different churches, orthodox in fundamentals, but differing greatly on some questions of comparatively lighter moment. These were so extended, in consequence, as to embrace not only the principal doctrines of the faith, but the peculiar views of the

churches which agreed upon them, on those subjects of controversy by which the age was distinguished. All these are unquestionably tests, and were designed as such, and all were necessary; the first class, to secure the renunciation of Judaism and Paganism; the second class, to exclude those from the church who had made shipwreck of the faith; the third class, to promote peace, by obliging Christians differing considerably in non-essentials to form themselves into distinct religious societies. The only evils which could arise, through human infirmity, respect the second and third classes. Creeds of the second class ought to contain only fundamentals; or they ought not to be so enforced, that communion with the church should be denied on account of the smaller shades of opinion on the points of mere exposition, when the truth is substantially held. Those of the third class may lawfully guard the fellowship of particular churches, especially as to their ministry, against persons holding different opinions on non-fundamentals; but this ought never to be considered as an exclusion from the general community of the faithful, from the church universal. Such offences against charity have taken place, but they are not necessarily connected with the establishment of these tests themselves. Order, fidelity, and charity are all compatible; and where an error is fundamental, it is charity to the erring party not to sanction his mistakes and unbelief. The church of God is the depository of the truth; and to that trust she is required to be inflexibly faithful.

The learned author of these Dissertations refutes, in his introductory chapter, the notion that the Creed called "the Apostles' Creed" was composed by the apostolic council at Jerusalem. He allows, however, its great antiquity, and sufficiently accounts for the title which it bears, by its being regarded as an authorized summary of the Apostles' doctrine. In its present form, it is not, indeed, so ancient as the time of the Apostles, by perhaps four hundred years; yet, as we learn from Irenæus and Tertullian, a form not very different from it was used long before. Such formularies may be traced at least to the very precincts of the apostolic age; and it is

not improbable that such expressions as “the form of sound words,” and “the words of faith,” mentioned in St. Paul’s Epistles to Timothy, and “the principles of the doctrine of Christ,” in the Epistle to the Hebrews, refer to those summaries of the leading articles of the faith of Christians, in which the catechumens and Gentile disciples were first instructed. There are, indeed, two strong points of presumptive evidence that the Apostles’ Creed, in its general construction, can claim an antiquity higher than that to which, in its present exact form and arrangement, it can be traced. Its Greek denomination is *συμβολον*, “a symbol ;” which in its most frequent import signifies “a sign,” or “military oath ;” because it is, “as it were, a sign of the covenant with God, into which we enter at baptism ; and a sort of military oath, by which faithful soldiers of Christ may easily be distinguished from perfidious deserters ;” or, as Saurin has observed, “because the profession of faith in the truths contained in this Creed is the mark by which Christians testify their submission to the doctrine of the Apostles, and by which they distinguish themselves from those who reject it.” It was not till the fifth or sixth century, that it was repeated at every assembly of the church. In earlier times it was used principally at the administration of baptism ; and its connexion with that rite naturally carries it up to those earliest times when Christianity was still surrounded with Paganism, and when adults were still the most frequent subjects of that ordinance. The other point is the peculiar reverence with which it was treated in early ages, and which ultimately led to its repetition being made to form a part of every leading public service in the church. Its early designations were all emphatic, and conveyed the idea of a form of such peculiar authority and eminence, as may well bear the conclusion, that it had the authentication of the first founders of the Christian church,—of names to which the whole church, throughout all its branches, was accustomed entirely to defer. It was called *συμβολον*, “the sign,” “the mark ;” *μαθημα*, “the lesson ;” and *γραφη*, “the writing.”

The author of the work before us is well known to have

been of the Calvinistic school ; but in these Dissertations the peculiarities of his creed only appear incidentally. He was a mild and pious, as well as a very able, man ; and, when read with discrimination, his eloquent writings will well repay the perusal. The work here translated is indeed professedly a practical one ; and though Witsius was too much a critic and a systematic Divine, to lay aside the character of either in any of his writings, yet the great tendency of these volumes is to give to the truths contained in the apostolic symbol, their due weight upon the hearts and lives of his pupils. They were composed in the course of his duties as Professor of Divinity at Leyden ; and happy would it be, did every teacher of that sublime science feel with the venerable Dutch Professor, that the experience and practice of the truths of Christian theology must be joined with a speculative knowledge of them, before his pupils can be fitted for the work of ministering in the church of God.

“It appeared to me,” says the author in his preface, “extremely undesirable, that those with whose education for the sacred office we are entrusted, should at length ascend the pulpit to entertain the Christian people with frigid, though perhaps sublime, discourses, or with unprofitable, though sufficiently warm, discussions ; neglecting, in the mean time, to inspire their minds with any relish for heavenly objects, with any desire for divine consolations, with any love for genuine piety. I daily urged them to consider that religion is not seated in the tongue, but in the mind ; that it consists not in words, but in deeds ; not in the subtlety of speculations, but in purity of heart ; not in the affectation of new discoveries, but in the prosecution of a new life. They were frequently reminded, that he alone is a true theologian, who adds the practical to the theoretical part of religion ; who combines exhortation to duty with the elucidation of doctrine. They were told, also, that this is not to be done merely in a superficial, formal, and customary manner, at the conclusion of a sermon ; but that the whole discourse should be so framed, that the soul, fixed in earnest and adoring contemplation of astonishing truths, may feel itself inflamed with a heavenly

zeal to regulate the life in a manner becoming the knowledge and the faith of those glorious realities." (Vol. I., pages xxxv., xxxvi.)

The second Dissertation is on "Fundamental Articles;" and on this important subject the views of our author appear to us to be generally just, wisely discriminating, and charitable as far as truth allows,—and beyond that, charity towards men who err in essentials, except it be the charity of commiseration, is always either a hollow pretence, or a dangerous concession. It is true Christian charity, honestly to warn the erring of their danger, and to use all proper means to reclaim them; but it is no charity to allow that men who have renounced all that is distinctive in Christianity can still remain Christians, can be entitled to the fraternity of the faithful, and retain an unforfeited claim to the same hopes. The one is the charity which pities, urges, and extricates; the other, for fear of disturbing the passions of the party in danger, cries, "Peace, when there is no peace."

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The allusion to the Dutch Remonstrants, Vol. I., page 27, will be noticed by the reader. The author refers to Episcopius, Limborch, and some others of the followers of Arminius, who, driven to the extreme by their Calvinistic opponents, (whose bigotry excluded, both from their own communion and from salvation, all who did not acknowledge their doctrine of the decrees to be a fundamental point of faith, and pursued them with disgraceful persecutions,) were disposed to consider those doctrines only as fundamental, in admitting which even Arians, and the Socinians of that day, would agree with the orthodox. "They were men," says Dr. Waterland, "who made the truth and the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity two distinct questions; admitting the one, and demurring to the other. The design of this middle way, was to reconcile parties, if possible, and to condemn the doctrine of the Socinians, without condemning the men." A principle is often best tried by its practical results; and if Episcopius were now alive, it would be somewhat amusing to observe the means he would take to apply his comprehending scheme to the Socinians



of this day. In his time, the Socinians received the whole New Testament as inspired, and supported their notions by attempts, at least, at consistent interpretation. Here was, therefore, (great as we think the error of Episcopius and his followers was,) a common ground on which the orthodox and the Socinians could meet,—the supreme authority of the Scriptures; and the latitude claimed for the latter, by those of the Remonstrant Divines who followed Episcopius, was the latitude of ample interpretation. In the present day, even that portion of common ground is taken away; the inspiration of the Apostles is denied; that of our Lord questioned; and whatever in the New Testament will not melt down into the mass, is boldly rejected from the crucible of Socinian criticism. Where now would Episcopius draw the line between truths necessary, and truths non-necessary? It is, however, to be remarked, that Episcopius was himself, and so was Limborch, a firm and devout believer in the doctrine of the Trinity, and an able defender of it; that it is laid down in the Remonstrants' Confession, in full and strong terms;\* and that any inference from this incautious liberality of Episcopius, and some other Remonstrants, towards the Socinians, unfavourable to their or to his orthodoxy, is without foundation. We make this remark, because Mr. Fraser, the translator of these Dissertations, who has appended to them numerous notes, some of which are instructive and valuable, has in the seventh of them so expressed himself as to leave a doubtful impression as to this point upon the mind of the reader. The opinions of the Remonstrants are to be taken from their Confession, and their early Divines, such as the learned and truly evangelical Arminius, and many others. What some of the later Divines, taking the name of Remonstrants or Arminians, became, is much less relevant to

\* *Cæterum distinctè ac relatè consideratur Deus sub Trinâ Hypostasi, sive Tribus Personis: Solus Pater originis omnis expers,—sed qui Deitatem tamen suam, tum Filio unigenito, tum etiam Spiritui Sancto, ab eterno communicavit. Filius ergo, et Spiritus Sanctus, ejusdem cum Patre deitatis, seu divinæ essentiae ac naturæ, absolutè ac communiter consideratæ, consortes sunt, &c.—Confess. cap. iii.*

Arminianism, than the sentiments of the Dutch and English Antinomians would be to Calvinism ; but the translator has obviously little information on these subjects, or his candour would not have suffered him to state, in the same note, that “ the Arminian system, it is well known, is just a modification of the errors of Pelagianism.” We are not sure that we precisely understand the force of this Scotticism, “ just a modification :” In our southern idiom it would mean a modification, and scarcely one ; that is, that Arminianism is nearly the same thing as Pelagianism, and that in the Arminian system Pelagianism has scarcely undergone any change. It is not, however, necessary to settle the degree, since Arminianism is neither a modification of Pelagianism, nor identical with it. It is essentially different ; and that Mr. Fraser would have known, had he read either the Remonstrants' Confession, the works of the early Remonstrant Divines, or even the article on Arminianism in the Edinburgh Encyclopædia, though drawn up by a Calvinist.

The Dissertation on faith contains some good passages ; but, as a whole, and as professing to be an account of “ saving faith,” it is confused and unsatisfactory ;—a very common fault with systematic Divines, and one found equally among those of the Pelagian and the Calvinistic classes. And, what is still more singular, opposite as these extremes are on this subject, they meet in several particulars. Witsius makes saving faith to include knowledge, assent, love of the truth, and exultation in it ; desire after Christ, and receiving and resting in Christ ; yielding up the soul to him, glorying in him as our own, &c. ; all of which are amplified, and illustrated apparently with great attention. It is, however, clear, that knowledge of the Scriptures, and assent to their truth generally, are not of the essence of saving faith ; for they precede it, and may be conceived to exist independent of it ; and in every penitent do so exist, for they exist before it. Saving faith, is, in its proper import, the same as justifying faith ; when faith justifies, it saves, and not before ; and every future act of faith, which leads to a higher salvation, is the exercise of the same faith ; that is, substantially, the same trust in Christ, in the merit of his

atonement, in the power of his intercession, and in the faithfulness of the promises of God in him. Before justification there is conviction of sin, a sense of danger, and repentance ; all of which necessarily suppose knowledge of the truth, and assent to it. Still, however, whatever degree of faith assent may suppose, it is not in this case saving ; for the convinced and condemned person is not, as such, actually saved. It is also a singular collocation in the above description of faith, to put love of the truth before trusting in Christ, which is the essence of saving faith. Without this personal trust there is no justification ; before justification, no salvation ; and, therefore, could this love of the truth exist as Witsius has stated it, it would be no part of saving faith. Indeed, as love and faith are two different affections, it is an obvious error to make the one a component part of the other. "Love of the truth, exulting in it, and glorifying God," are fruits of justifying faith, not of its essence, nor precedent to it ; for before justification there is no more "exulting in the truth," by the penitent and consciously guilty man, than there is love of the law by which he is condemned, on the part of the convicted criminal. The simple view of this subject is, that saving faith is a personal act of trust, on the part of the consciously convicted and condemned sinner, in the atonement made by Christ for sin, as the exclusive and only reason of his acceptance with God, and the pardon of his offences. Every thing else perplexes and confounds ; this alone meets the case, and fixes the attention of the seeker of salvation entirely upon the only and the effectual means by which it can be attained. On the various operations and effects of saving faith in him who now believes, and has "peace with God," much may be instructively said ; but it is often one of the causes of obscurity in these discussions, to confound the acts, and operations, and fruits of the faith of justified believers, with that simple trust in Christ which is exercised in order to justification. We observe, also, another statement which calls for remark. Witsius speaks of a consciousness of justifying faith. Our knowledge that we are Christ's, and

that all his "saving benefits" are ours, he represents as acquired by a reflex act of faith ; in other words, I am conscious that I have justifying faith ; and then "faith reasons infallibly," "I am justified, he is mine, and I am his." This whole foundation is unsound ; because, as we have no rule in Scripture to enable us to ascertain the measure of faith required in order to our justification, save that it must be entire and exclusive, and as we cannot ourselves be the infallible judges of this point, consciousness of justifying faith is impossible and absurd. This would indeed be to make faith justify ministerially ; whereas it justifies but instrumentally, as a condition, of which, not the offending party, but the party offended, must be the judge, from whom alone the assurance must be derived, that our sins, which are many, are all forgiven. The agent in this communication to the soul, is in Scripture said to be the Holy Spirit ; and we are the more surprised that in this account of saving faith, and the peace and joy which follow it, Witsius should have made no reference to the Spirit's office as a witness, since on the article, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," he has expressed himself so well on this point :—

"The Spirit cheers us, also, in another form, by causing us to 'know the things that are freely given us of God.' (1 Cor. ii. 12.) This he doth by secretly witnessing to our spirit, and with our spirit. (Rom. viii. 16.) And truly it is the voice of the Spirit only, that is able to raise up the soul bowed down under the weight of its sorrows. Although a person should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, whilst the internal operation of the Spirit doth not concur, he will prove a miserable comforter. But a single word of the Spirit has greater efficacy than a thousand discourses addressed to the outward ear by all the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, nay, by the Lord Jesus himself, unaccompanied by the inward teaching of the Spirit.

"Nor is it very difficult for believers, provided they give due attention and diligence, to distinguish these operations of the Spirit from the illusions of the flesh or of a

malignant demon, or even from those common operations of the Spirit which are unproductive of holiness. This appears from the words of our Lord: 'Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.' (John xiv. 17.) These operations are discerned, both from their very nature, when separately considered, and from the order in which they are wisely connected, and the relation which they bear to one another. In each of them there is a brightness, majesty, and efficacy, so conspicuous and striking, that the light of noon-day doth not more clearly discover the sun, than those operations discover the Spirit as their author." (Vol. II., pages 341, 342.)

In the rules for distinguishing between true and inefficacious faith, we also find much obscurity; but this, indeed, arises in part from the author's system. The leading Calvinistic Divines have the merit of stating all those grand doctrines of revelation, which are not directly connected with their system, with great clearness and ability; and when they write practically, their works contain, likewise, fine exhibitions of Christian morals, in their union with Christian principles. But in matters of experience, as resulting from the work of God in the heart, we consider them as often, indeed too generally, very perplexed. We do not mean that their experimental writings are not, in some respects, exceedingly valuable; taken with discrimination, they deserve great praise; but their system leads them to so many qualifying, and even opposing, statements, that, as a whole, they often plunge us into deep and inextricable labyrinths. They well and forcibly lay down the total corruption and moral imbecility of human nature; yet, when they are accounting for the good desires and inclinations of many who hear the Gospel without fully embracing it, or previously to their embracing it,—for those softenings of the affections, repentings, and resolves, which all who are placed within the reach of religious influence occasionally, and even frequently, feel,—in order to avoid

attributing these to the Spirit of God, they ascribe them wholly to natural feeling; and thus find, in the mere natural man, tendencies which are wholly incompatible with a total depravation of the heart. If, with us, they refer these, not to nature, but to grace, they fly to their distinction of common and special grace,—working, and effectual working; thus confounding the reader by terms without meaning, and rendering, by their nice refinements, the evidences of real grace obscure and often imperceptible. The doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, well stated by many of their Divines, is by this very influence of system chased out of the rank of privileges common to all believers, and constituting, indeed, the only seal of their justifying faith; and in order to account for “believers walking in darkness,” that witness is made a special privilege, and the evidence of justification is reduced to an inference resting upon our own authority; for he who is once a child of God, being, according to them, a child of God for ever, the witness of the Spirit is no longer necessary to attest adoption, or necessary only once for all. “Walking in the Spirit,” is a doctrine, therefore, much reduced in import, and narrowed in meaning. Their doctrine of the indefectibility of the saints obliges them, in order to account for the final falling away of men who, to all appearance, and on scrutiny the most strict, for a long time “ran well,” to resort to laboured attempts to show how completely a true experience may be simulated by a hypocrite; which is often done by these authors in such terms, and to such extent, in many instances, as to render it impossible to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit; and thus their experimental system tends to plunge conscientious and sincere persons into the deepest and most distressing doubts. Finally: Their doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin till death, obscures that “beauty of holiness” which shines so vividly in the New Testament, and in many parts, too, of their own writings. Traces of all these defects will be observed in the Dissertations before us, though the work of a truly pious man, as well as a very learned Divine. The

more frequently we turn to such writings, greatly valuing them, as we do, for their real excellencies, the more do we admire the unity, clearness, and consistency with the Scriptures, which characterize the experimental discourses of the venerable Wesley, who, as the theologian of the heart, stands unrivalled in modern times.

On all subjects relative to the divine Trinity, Witsius is to be strongly recommended, as guiding his views by the Nicene and Athanasian faith, and that with great sobriety, and judicious discrimination. His sentiments on the divine Paternity, and the divine Sonship of our Lord, are given at considerable length.

## REVIEW XXV.

*A Sermon preached at the Coronation of George IV., in the Abbey-Church of Westminster, July 19th, 1821; by Edward Lord Archbishop of York. Published by His Majesty's special Command. 4to. Pp. 18.*

Court sermons are not usually those to which we turn for expositions of important Christian doctrine, or even for the strenuous and honest enforcement of Christian practice. "They that wear soft clothing are in Kings' houses," would be no unapt description of the sermons of many royal Chaplains, as well as of the persons of royal attendants. The choice of courtly phraseology, and the turn of periods, we fear, have too often been more regarded, than the selection of those topics which Kings themselves ought to hear, when in the presence of Him before whom "the servant is as his master," from the lips of those who stand commissioned "to declare the whole counsel of God." The Preachers before the courts of Catholic Monarchs have, it is true, often distinguished themselves by the boldness of their reproofs. Something may, perhaps, in their case, be attributed to the spirit of an ambitious order, which has aimed, in all ages, to exalt itself rather than its professed Master, Christ, above the Princes and Kings of the earth. We, nevertheless, reverence ministerial fidelity in all circumstances, and, especially, in cases where the temptation lies strongly against it. The finest compliment ever paid to a Preacher, was that of Louis XIV. to Massillon: "I have heard, father, many eloquent Preachers, who have greatly pleased me; but whenever I hear you, I am displeased with myself." Our own country is not, however, without many honourable examples of Preachers who could "speak of God's testimonies before Kings, and not be ashamed;" and of this the Sermon before us is a creditable specimen.



To no part of the august ceremonial of the late coronation do we turn with greater interest, than to those impressive religious rites which ancient custom has mingled with the pomp and pageantry of the most splendid array of earthly grandeur. We do not object to the pomp itself. In point of expense, it is, questionless, greatly counterbalanced by the impulse given to trade and industry, arising out of the large sums which such an occasion obliges the nobility and gentry of the realm to spend upon the preparations necessary for their attendance. Viewing the coronation as a political transaction, it has a powerful claim to be performed in public, and in the presence of the estates of the realm. The solemn compact between the King and his people, in a limited monarchy like ours, is thus openly renewed. And nothing, certainly, ought to excite a devouter feeling of gratitude, next to our redemption, and our direct religious benefits, than the circumstance, that the boundaries of the rights and duties of every estate of the realm have been closely defined;—that this complex Constitution of ours, under which the country has made such large progress in power, wealth, science, external happiness, and, above all, in moral and religious character, has been preserved to us amidst so many changes and agitations, both about us, and even among ourselves;—and that we have seen that Constitution (so favourable to true liberty, because of its equal provisions against arbitrary power on the one hand, and against popular licence on the other) again solemnly recognised by the oaths of the Prince, taken at the altar of God, and by the homages and acclamations of the people. For who, that looks round upon the nations of Europe, and observes in some the total absence of religious and civil freedom, which we, through the mercy of God, enjoy,—or the difficulty which arises whenever the restraints of arbitrary power are broken by violent revolution, in balancing the varied interests and conflicting claims of the different orders of society, so that one fearful convulsion only passes to prepare the way for another,—can refuse to acknowledge, if he have any claim to the character of a considerate and religious man, the special kindness of Almighty God to us as a people?

After the storms of former ages, we are moored in a quiet haven, out of which none but those who hope to profit by the wreck can wish to drive us, again to contend with the fury of ungoverned elements. The coronation, in this view, is among the most important events of the year. We have been reminded by it of our civil blessings. That ceremonial was a recognition of the principles on which our great national interests repose with so much security. It was a recognition of so much importance, that nothing but public acts could be meet for its proclamation ; and, being public, it was naturally associated with pomp and splendour ; and thus openly appealed to the feelings of national loyalty, and to the ardour of national gratitude. But, as a religious ceremony, (and it is eminently so,) it has a still deeper interest. In this view, it was rather reproofing. Whilst many of the ancient civil forms and habits of the occasion take us back to the customs of our ancestors, the religious part of the ceremony revives the recollection of their principles. In one respect, whatever self-gratulations we may indulge, we may stand humbled before them. In modern times we have been too apt to confine religion to what we have chosen to call “ its own province ;” out of which province one has excepted one thing, another a second, till the range of religious influence and control has been greatly diminished. Our ancestors carried their religion into every thing, and thought nothing out of the range of its control. Hence we uniformly find this acknowledgment of God, and his providence, and his holy law, wherever attachment to custom and antiquity has operated to prevent the encroachments of what has been considered the better taste of the age. We have it in forms of wills ; in indictments at law ; in bills of lading ; in deeds of gift ; in the charters of schools of learning ; in the prayers during the sittings of Parliament ; and, largely, in the coronation ceremonies. We fear that this, by too many, would now be denominated cant ; and that, if many of these things were to begin again, they would begin without God, and all religious interference be frowned into “ its proper province.” The religion of our ancestors might not always be quite defecated ; the principle was,

however, sound and just,—that what was regarded as religion should have a paramount place in all the institutions of a professing Christian country, and in all the transactions of life. They may be laughed at as forms ; but though forms may exist without the reality, the reality will never be found where the outward expression of it is wanting. We are not, however, bold enough to say, that all is mere form, even when the power is not so visible as we could wish ; and if, indeed, we have obtained a purer system, shame on us if we do not act upon our pretensions, and prove that our light is really of a purer kind ; more sun-like, by the breadth over which it spreads, the distance to which it darts, and the influence which it exerts.

As a record of the piety of our ancestors ; as a recognition of the place which religion ought to hold in all the affairs of civil life, and that nothing is too high for its control, or too low for its condescensions ; and, also, because a great part of the religious service has not been given to the public in the generality of publications, we take this opportunity of preserving, in our pages, the entire coronation-office as performed in Westminster Abbey ; earnestly praying that the petitions offered on that occasion may be abundantly answered upon our gracious Sovereign and his whole realm.

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## REVIEW XXVI.

*The Rights of God and Cæsar ; a Discourse on Matthew xxii. 15—21.*

*By Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.A.S., &c., &c. Pp. 32. 8vo.*

*Divine Providence Illustrated in the Ordination of Political Government ; a Discourse on Romans xiii. 1. By David M'Nicoll.*

*Pp. 44. 8vo.*

WE connect these discourses in our review, because they are on the same subject. The latter was preached on the death of His late Majesty, and ought to have been noticed and recommended by us at an earlier period. The former has recently been issued from the press.

To political sermons we are aware that many objections have been made ; and a few words on the subject of the duty of a Minister as to those questions which will be continually arising between the governed and their governors, in the agitations to which all states are liable, may properly introduce our remarks on these excellent discourses.

That the great work of Ministers is to state the doctrines of the Gospel, to convince men of their guilt and danger, to urge upon them the application of the provided remedy, and, after they have given themselves to Christ and to his church, to build them up on their most holy faith, is allowed by all ; and that, in order to this, Ministers ought to be eminently spiritual and holy, walking in a region far exalted above the strifes of human passions, and the swelling tumults of civil contentions, is equally accordant with the common conviction and feelings of true Christians.

It must, however, be allowed, that the work of the Minister is not done, when he has stated and enforced the generalities of Christian doctrine, experience, and morals. He is put in trust with the Gospel ; and the terms of the trust are, that the whole of that divine system of religion which is contained in the New Testament, should be faithfully and diligently stated

and enforced. Whatever there is of doctrine and of duty in that Gospel, it is imperative upon every Minister to teach, to whatever hazards in reputation, ease, or interest, he may expose himself. If he refuse, or neglect, he is not a "faithful," but an unfaithful, "Minister of the New Testament."

The question, therefore, as to political sermons, resolves itself into this,—whether there are any political duties enjoined in the New Testament; a question which admits of an immediate and explicit answer. It prescribes the rendering "unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," of "honour to whom honour is due, tribute to whom tribute." It declares human government to be an ordination of God, from which Christians are not, by virtue of their allegiance to Christ, in any civil matter exempt, but to which they are to "submit," even for "the Lord's sake." It connects the honouring of the chief Magistrate of a state with the fear of God, the first and fundamental duty of religion. It inhibits "railing," and "speaking evil of dignities;" it fixes obedience to Magistrates and to the laws, not upon the fear of wrath, but on the principle of conscientious regard to duty; and it infuses the Christian temper of patience, meekness, charity, and moderation, into those questions which are most liable to excite bitterness, strife, and malice. Nor are these obligations of Christian morality slipped into the exhortations of the Apostles of our Lord incidentally, as though they were to rank in the secondary order of our duties; but they are delivered with solemnity, and with an evident anxiety that they should be impressed upon the hearts of all who bear the Christian name. Of these duties Ministers are exhorted to put the churches in mind. They are to be held up in their services, so that none may offend through ignorance, or sin for want of warning. It follows, therefore, that if it be the duty of every Minister to enforce all the parts of Christian morality, he is bound to dwell upon this branch of it as often as upon any other of the relative and social duties.

There may be times when a larger consideration of these subjects is called for, on the principle of "a word spoken in season, how good is it!" The death of one Sovereign, and

the accession of another, present one of these seasons. This was the occasion which produced the discourse of Mr. M'Nicoll. A period of party-agitation, in which many were endangered by the prevalence of heated passions, and civil strifes, gave rise to the sermon of Dr. Clarke. Both contain words spoken "in season," and both are good. We are inclined, however, to think, that the principles and obligations established in the discourses before us, are too much reserved by the Ministers of Christ to extraordinary occasions ; which, as they of course seldom occur, scarcely comes up to the Apostolic injunction, " Put them in mind," &c. It would be more effectual, excellent as full occasional discourses on the civil conduct of Christians may be, were the relative duties of Kings, Magistrates, and subjects to be incidentally introduced into the pulpit among other relative duties and obligations of temper and conduct, and as often. Thus every congregation would be put in mind of the whole of its duties, and guarded against the hour of temptation. If to prevent is better than even to remedy, the prevention would be much more likely to take effect if applied in those seasons of public calmness, when no extraneous influence is at work to counteract the impression.

We do not intend by this remark to convey the idea, that a larger consideration of the political morality of the Bible, on signal or on pressing occasions, is not praiseworthy. On the contrary, if it is too seldom insisted on, the more necessary the " word in season " becomes ; nor would even the full discharge of ordinary ministerial duty, in this respect, render such seasonable services entirely unnecessary.

The title of Dr. Clarke's sermon, " The rights of God and Cæsar," indicates the passage of Scripture on which it is founded. The text is opened at large, with the author's usual ability as an expositor of God's word.

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Mr. M'Nicoll's text is, " The powers that be are ordained of God." The discourse is elaborate, and contains much acute observation, the fruit of a well-furnished and investigating mind

The parts of this discourse are so connected with each other, that, unless we had room for long quotations, the argument would suffer.

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Mr. M'Nicoll, in one part of his discourse, has entered upon the delicate subject of resistance to Governments in extreme cases ; and it is no small praise that he has discussed this difficulty with steady reference to the obligations of Christian duty. His conclusion, if it should not be wholly satisfactory, is moderate and safe, and certainly in the spirit of that great political change which fixed the liberties, civil and religious, of our own country. We confess, however, that the discussion of such a subject appears to us to be wholly unnecessary, and rather injurious than instructive. It is one which, as a great authority, from whom Mr. M'Nicoll has quoted, states, is not to be even contemplated until actually forced upon us ; and the reason is, that we cannot previously image to ourselves the circumstances, before the case occurs, and therefore cannot, with any certainty, lay down principles of duty with regard to it. All disaffection and disorder which may exist among us, in the present state of things, are to be met on other grounds. In a country where religious freedom is unfettered, where even factious men hesitate to fix a charge upon the pure administration of law and justice, where the press is free, where public burdens are equally shared, and where a public opinion operates with mighty force,—such an extreme case, as must be contemplated in the argument, is almost at the farthest possible remove from us. All the obligations of Christianity as to subjection are, therefore, in their full force, and are to have unrestrained influence. It cannot for a moment be doubted how the Apostles, and their great Master, would have acted in the present state of things in this country ; and there can be no hesitation in any sound mind, in enforcing, to the full extent, all their precepts. If any thing be capable of a clear manifestation to the understanding and conscience of one who, in sincerity, acknowledges the authority of Christianity to rule both his heart and life, it is, that, whilst he may deplore any existing evils, and may, in a

calm and peaceful manner, seek their remedy by legal means, there are laid upon him, on pain of his own condemnation, the duty of subjection to the laws; reverence for the offices of magistracy; the exercise of that candour towards all in authority, which he would expect for himself in the discharge of any civil and religious office with which he might be invested; a tongue in which is the law of kindness, and not the sharp sword of calumny; and a temper moderate and subdued, such as may give no offence to the indwelling Spirit; without which, whatever his professions may be, he is but “sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.”



## REVIEW XXVII.

*The Reasons of the Laws of Moses. From the "More Nevochim," of Maimonides. With Notes, Dissertations, and a Life of the Author. By James Townley, D.D., Author of "Illustrations of Biblical Literature," &c. 8vo. Pp. 451. 10s. 6d.*

THE work which Dr. Townley has here translated, has been quoted at different times, and by the most celebrated Christian writers; and has sometimes afforded useful illustrations of Jewish antiquities; at other times it has helped to give a show of authority to some erroneous views of very important subjects. At first sight, the opinion of a learned, and, upon the whole, a rational, Jewish Rabbi, would seem to be a sanction from which it would not be modest to appeal. We must, however, take this impression with many serious allowances and deductions; and we shall come to this conclusion at last, if the inquiry be conducted carefully, that, since the dispersion, the Old Testament has been very little indebted for explanation to any Jewish Theologue. One class of the Rabbies have been besotted with traditions, and involved in the inextricable mazes of an imaginative interpretation, which sets all just criticism at defiance. Another class have been imbued with the philosophy of the Greeks, and stalked forth with the gown of the Gentile sophist thrown over the cloak, and veil, and phylactery; and the dogmata which they have enounced, have usually been as uncouth and ridiculous as the affected garb. Where the Rabbi predominates, and where the philosopher, it is often difficult to determine; but of this we shall be convinced, that "the key of knowledge," which the Scribes took away in our Lord's time, by their traditions, was not again found, either in the visions of Plato, or the sterner investigations of the Stagyrte.

The volume before us is made an interesting and instructive one, not so much by what Dr. Townley has translated of the

“More Nevochim,” as by the introductory dissertations and appended notes with which he has judiciously furnished it. It is in them, rather than in what Maimonides has written, that the student will find an apparatus for understanding the law, and his way prepared for the study of larger treatises. These dissertations are on the Talmudical and Rabbinical writings, the Zabian idolatry, the originality of the institutions of Moses, the distinction of clean and unclean animals, the prohibition of blood, the typical character of the Mosaical institutions, the leprosy, talismans, talismanic figures, and judicial astrology ; all of them subjects necessary to be understood, in order to explain many parts of the Old and New Testaments, and to enter into their general design. The best authors have been consulted ; and the articles are drawn up with great judgment and clearness.

When, however, we say, that this is the most valuable part of the work, we do not intend too greatly to undervalue the “Reasons of the Laws of Moses,” as given by Maimonides. The Mosaic precepts stand connected with antiquities and history, which a learned Jew might usefully study and explain ; and so far as they are parts of a civil code, their philosophy, as well as their adaptation to the circumstances of an early period of the world, might be often disclosed to the researches of one who, as to other subjects of a higher and of more permanent importance, had “the veil upon his heart.” The true reasons of the law of Moses, as to its highest design, and as to many of its most singular and impressive institutions, could not be known to Maimonides, nor to any man not a Christian ; nor even to any professing Christian expositor, unless he held the divinity and sacrifice of Christ, as the grand basis of all God’s dispensations of religion to fallen man, whether Patriarchal, Mosaical, or Christian. Maimonides is an interpreter of the Old Testament, of the same class as Socinians of modern times ; and the laws of Moses wore to him much the same aspect as the doctrine of Christ wears to the latter ; both are converted into “the letter which killeth ;” and from both “the Spirit which giveth life” escapes. It is, nevertheless, not unprofitable to notice

what reasons a shrewd and philosophic mind can give for precepts which have no true comment but in the acts, and sufferings, and offices of a Messiah whom the author rejects, and in a book (the important Epistle to the Hebrews) which perhaps he never read ; or, if he read, certainly did not receive in its proper character, as the gate of the temple, the grand exponent of the mysteries of Jewish altars and festivals, of its singular Priesthood, and of its no less singular history.

The first question with which Maimonides struggles is, whether the Mosaic precepts have a discoverable design, or depend solely on the will of God. The mooted of this very point shows the perplexity into which the learned and inquisitive among the Jews were thrown in his day ; a perplexity which involves them still, and must ever involve them whilst they reject the solution of the whole, which is contained in the Gospel. No such question was ever, or could ever, be agitated as to any other ancient system of polity and jurisprudence. All other codes are at once assumed to have a reason ; and the reasons for what is most singular in them have been satisfactorily evolved by the study of their circumstances and relations. Here, however, we find the intelligent Jews confessing that their law is *sui generis* ; and that not only with respect to its author, but as to its precepts ; the reasons of which, to them, are so obscure, that some give up the point in despair, and resolve the whole into the arbitrary will of God. This very circumstance is a strong presumption that the solution must be sought where they were unwilling to search for it, even in the New Testament ; for the doctrine of arbitrary will is too violent a cutting of the knot to give any wise man satisfaction. It is, therefore, a just and unanswerable argument of Maimonides, to those who contend that the precepts of the law have no discoverable reasons : “ According to them, man acts with design in all he does and says ; but that God commands us to do those things, from the performance of which we shall derive no benefit, and by the neglect of which we shall sustain no injury. Far, indeed, be this from the Creator, who has himself intimated to us, that the design of all the precepts is, to promote our happi-

ness: 'For our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day.' (Deut. vi. 24.) In this sense it is also said, 'This is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these things.' (Deut. iv. 6.) And again: 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For these words show that all nations will understand these statutes to be replete with the highest wisdom and intelligence. But if the causes of them were hidden, and no utility could be discovered in them, either producing good or averting evil, wherefore should it be said of those who receive and practise them, that they are wise and intelligent; or, that they are great, and the admiration of all nations?"

Maimonides, therefore, wisely plants himself among those who think that the Mosaic institute was grounded on reasons, which he very well refers to faith, morals, and civil polity; but as the great object was to discover a rationale of the whole institute, which should exclude all typical and adumbrative rites and injunctions, that might tend to conduct the reader to Christianity, he takes this as the grand key: "God enjoined these precepts that we might by them be led to the knowledge of God, and the abandonment of idolatry, which are the first intention of the law." In this he has sometimes been too incautiously followed by Christian commentators; who have thus, unintentionally, no doubt, greatly betrayed the cause of truth, by sinking into a secondary and inferior place those glorious evidences of the divinity of Christianity, which arise from its being so manifestly the substance of the Levitical shadow. The law was not given to lead men to the knowledge of God, for God was already known to the Jews; although it is true that the knowledge of God was augmented and enforced by the law. Nor was the law given to lead men from idolatry, which the Hebrews did not practise; though it is true, that its design was to preserve them from it, and that they needed so strong a sanction to prevent their falling into this infatuation. Strong, however, as it was, it did not always accomplish this end. But whilst this principle is admitted, there are two modes of applying it; one of which

is exceedingly partial and delusive ; and to this, Maimonides and his followers have given the preference.

The intention of the law, say they, was to preserve the knowledge of God ; therefore its precepts were directed against every idolatrous and superstitious practice, which implied a rejection of any of his perfections, or a distrust in them. The rites of idolatry were licentious and cruel ; therefore, in all the Mosaic institutions, which forbid pollution and cruelty, or enjoin the contrary, there is a reference to such rites. Now this may be in some cases true ; yet it carries us but a little way in the exposition of the Mosaic economy ; and the great fact is lost sight of, that the knowledge of God, and a worship free from pollution and superstition, were to be maintained not merely by the detail of minor precepts and usages, which were only subsidiary to the grand design ; but by the establishment of a formal and comprehensive code of faith, worship, and morals. In other words, false religion was to be kept out, not so much by introducing a more hallowed use of the heathen ritual, in some of its better portions, and by forbidding other minor superstitious practices, as seething a kid in its mother's milk, and sowing a field with different kinds of grain ; but by the establishment of a full and, for the ends intended, a perfect system of true religion ; by establishing in a more formal manner the system of the Patriarchs, and connecting it with the solemnities of national worship, legal enactment, and public instruction. It is not at all satisfactory to be told, because some of the rites which were forbidden to the Jews were practised by idolatrous nations, the final cause of the Mosaic law was to counteract idolatry by the establishment of a rival ritual. This may be true in some particulars ; but we want the grand reason still of the call of Abraham, the election of the Jews, the giving of the law, the preservation of a separate people by miracle, the establishment of a Priesthood and sacrifices in the solemn order which was so carefully enjoined, the succession of Prophets, the constant looking forward of that institution, in all its parts, to something higher and more perfect, and the singular interconnexion of the Jewish history with that of the

great states of antiquity. These are the phenomena to be explained, and of which the contracted and superficial theory of Maimonides offers no solution.

To maintain his hypothesis, that the prime intention of the law was to rescue men from idolatry, and that its object terminated here, Maimonides assumes the high antiquity of Zabianism, or the worship of the stars; pretends to have the books of the Zabii before him, affirming this antiquity; and he accounts for the call of Abraham on the sole ground of his being designed to bear testimony against this corruption. Now this point alone shows the insufficiency of this Rabbi to give reasons for the laws of Moses; since it shows that he sacrifices to theory what is plainly said of Abraham in his own Scriptures. We may allow, indeed, a high antiquity to the worship of the celestial bodies; but it is perfectly gratuitous to ascribe the perfected system of gross Zabianism to the age of Abraham. Maimonides seems to represent the world then as lost to the knowledge of an immaterial Deity, and an eternal Creator; (page 157;) whereas the history of Abraham shows, that both in Egypt and in Canaan the true God was familiarly known, publicly worshipped, and recognised as a just Governor of the world. Whatever minor superstitions had crept in, or however, along with Jehovah, other ideal beings were associated as objects of hope or fear, the nations had not then fallen into that besotting and material idolatry which afterwards debased them. As for the books of the Zabii, consulted by Maimonides, they either misled him by pretensions to antiquity, which we know no books at that time existent had, though it has been common for pagan books to affect dates extravagantly early; or else he willingly assumed that the books which detailed the opinions and rites of idolatry at the time they were written, contained the description of the actual idolatry of the first ages; forgetting that men do not all at once, and cannot all at once, put out the light of truth, and prostrate the common sense of men before the ravings and dreams of a matured system of superstition. We attach little weight, therefore, to his quotations from such books. But his most marked error is, in representing the

call of Abraham as intended merely to raise up a man who should "by argument refute the Zabian opinions, and by gentle and persuasive methods draw men to the worship of the true God." For, not to urge that the Mosaic history gives no countenance to this notion, it leaves quite unaccounted for the great events of the life of Abraham. It gives no reason for his call out of his own country; or rather it makes him a persecuted exile from it, instead of a man chosen by God to sojourn in another land for the sake of preparing the way for the ulterior designs of Providence. The theory also leaves quite unexplained the covenants with Abraham; and the promise of a Seed, in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed; neither of which could have any relation to Zabianism. It affords no key to the intentional offering of Isaac, and which might rather seem to encourage human sacrifices among the Heathen, than to reprove them; nor do we see any reason in this hypothesis why Abraham and his sons should live in tents, and be pilgrims in the land, rather than take possession of permanent dwellings, and like the Patriarchs found tribes and nations; and finally, it affords no clue to that Providence which thus brought the chosen seed into connexion and intercourse with Egypt, rather than Chaldaea; which latter place was, in fact, the great seat and source of astrological idolatry and delusion. We have a very different account of the reasons of all this in Christianity; and the reader has only to ask which of the two theories best explains the facts recorded in the Book of Genesis; which, though overlooked by Maimonides, could not be denied by him. Abraham and his seed were made the depositaries of the promises of the Redeemer; his offering of Isaac was the sign of his prevalent faith in them; the line of the descent of Messiah was marked out; the method of obtaining an interest in the mercies he was to convey to mankind was exhibited by the justification of Abraham by faith, of which, circumcision was the sign; he and his sons lived in tents, to testify their faith in a heavenly country; and their connexion with Egypt issued in that series of national arrangements which was intended to prepare the way for the future manifestation of the

promised Redeemer. But concerning these obvious intentions the Rabbi is totally silent. Thus Maimonides miserably fails to explain the reasons of the call and conduct of Abraham, as they are recorded in his own acknowledged sacred books; and equally as to the Mosaic institute is his theory like the bed of the Prophet, "too short for a man to stretch himself upon;" and, in fact, leaves almost every thing peculiar to that dispensation without any reason at all.

A few specimens, however, will more forcibly show how little explanation is given by this writer to the higher branches of the Mosaic dispensation; and how far the Rabbi is from conducting us into its spiritual significancy; much as he has been praised by some Christian Theologians.

In his division of the Mosaic precepts into fourteen classes, he makes the first to comprehend "fundamental articles of faith." These, however, he abstains from enumerating, and passes them over with a few jejune general remarks; so that he loses a fair opportunity of exhibiting the true glory of the doctrine of Moses, in comparison of the state of religious knowledge among the nations. This is a remarkable omission; and especially as the list of "fundamental articles," if fairly given, must have contained some reference to the hope of the Fathers, the promised Messiah. The Rabbi perhaps felt this to be tender ground; but the absence of all notice of this strong peculiarity in the theology of the Jews, shows how little qualified he was, not from want of learning, but from want of all true scriptural knowledge and taste, to comment upon these ancient revelations.

Circumcision offers another illustration. He assigns to it first a physical reason, certainly of no weight; then he makes it, like the sign of Free-Masonry, a means of sectarian recognition; and when, finally, he is obliged by the force of his own Scriptures to allow it to be "a sign of God's covenant," he phlegmatically adds, "This reason is at least as strong and valid as the former, if not more so." His notion of this covenant is, that it was founded upon the acknowledgment of the unity of God; and we may, therefore, ask how much the Christian student can learn from Maimonides, as to the reason



of the institution of circumcision, after he has read St. Paul ; who expressly tells us that Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also.” But this is a point which some Christian commentators have also overlooked. They have followed the Rabbi, and have forgotten St. Paul.

The following dry and puerile observations on “the holy places” will afford a specimen of the Rabbi’s research into the reasons of these sacred things ; and after reading them, the rich exposition of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, of the tabernacle and its furniture, will appear in striking contrast. In this point, indeed, Maimonides falls infinitely below Josephus, which is the effect of the cramping hypothesis he had adopted :—

“The ancient nations also erected temples to the stars, and placed in them idols dedicated to certain of the heavenly bodies which they universally worshipped ; and hence, we were commanded to build a temple to the most high God, and to place in it the ark, enclosing the two tables of stone, in which was written, ‘I am the Lord thy God ; thou shalt have no other gods before me ;’ that is, the whole of the Decalogue.

“Further, it is acknowledged, that belief in prophecy precedes belief in the law ; for if there be no Prophet, there is no law ; and prophecy is never communicated to a Prophet, but by the mediation of angels, as it is said, ‘The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham.’ (Gen. xxii. 15.) And again, ‘The angel of the Lord said unto her ;’ (Gen. xvi. 9 ; ) and in innumerable other places. Thus, also, the first revelation of prophecy to our teacher Moses was by an angel : ‘The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire ;’ (Exod. iii. 2 ; ) consequently belief in the existence of angels must be prior to belief in prophecy, and belief in prophecy prior to belief in the law. But the Zabii being ignorant of the nature of the true God, and regarding the heavens and

the heavenly bodies as that eternal Being who was free from all privation, and supposing that from thence all kinds of power flowed down into images and certain trees, called in the law *Asheroth*, אֲשֵׁרוֹת, concluded that those images and trees inspired the Prophets with the prophetic language which they uttered in their visions, predicting good or evil. But when the truth is made known by the wise men, and it is fully proved that there is a Being who is neither a body nor an attribute of body, namely, the true God; that he is one; that besides him there are other abstract and incorporeal beings, called ‘angels,’ upon whom he confers his light and goodness; and that all those beings are distinct from the spheres and their stars, they learn from thence that angels, and not images or trees, impart the words of truth to the Prophets. From what has just been said, it appears, therefore, clear, that belief in the existence of angels follows the belief in the existence of God, and that by them prophecy and the law are administered or confirmed.

“To establish this doctrine, God commanded the figure of two angels (cherubims) to be made and placed upon the ark, that the minds of men might be confirmed in the belief of the existence of angels, since this is an article of faith next to that of the being of a God, and prior to that of prophecy and the law; for if there had only been the figure of one angel or cherub, it might have led them into error, since they might have imagined that it was an image of God, such as the idolaters made and designed to be the object of worship, or might have been induced to believe that there was but one angel, and thus have fallen into different errors; but the making of two cherubims, accompanied by the declaration, ‘The Lord our God is one Lord,’ placed these articles of belief beyond dispute,—that angels do exist, and that they are numerous; and took away all occasions of error in supposing they were God, by declaring that God is one, and the Creator of all of them.

“After this it was commanded to place the candlestick before the ark, (Exod. xxv., xxvi.,) for the decoration and

honour of the house of God, as it is certain that house will be most highly venerated by men in which a light is kept perpetually burning within a veil; and, we know how earnestly and solicitously the law endeavours to convince us of the honour and glory of the sanctuary, that by the view of it we may learn humility, and gentleness, and mercy. Thus, in like manner, immediately after enjoining the observance of the Sabbath, it is said, ‘Ye shall reverence my sanctuary,’ (Levit. xix. 30,) in order to increase our veneration for it.

“The need of the altar of incense, of the altar of burnt-offering, and of their instruments or utensils, is sufficiently obvious; and as to what regards the table, and the bread to be continually placed upon it, I am hitherto ignorant both of the reason of them, and of the objects to which they refer.” (Pages 263—266.)

With sacrifices the Rabbi is evidently much perplexed; and he disposes of them by assuming, that before the giving of the law, they were used for idolatrous purposes, and under the law they were transferred as a part of worship to the name of God; for thus only can we interpret the following passage:—

“The primary intention of every part of the law is, that ye should know me, and forsake the service of other gods, that I may be to you a God, and that ye may be to me a people; and the precepts which enjoin oblations, and command you to worship in my house, are given to instruct and assist you in this duty; for the reason why I have transferred this mode of worship to my own name, is to efface the remembrance of idolatry, and establish the doctrine of my unity.” (Page 184.)

But as his own Scriptures had informed him, that sacrifices were offered by all the Patriarchs, and that to the honour of God, and in the name of God, his reasons for the sacrificial precepts of Moses demanded also the reasons for this primitive and adopted practice. Here the expositor fails us, and thus gives sufficient proof that the task he had undertaken was, with his views, far too onerous. How careful he was to exclude

any thing typical from the sacrifices of the law, appears also from the general reason which he gives for the law of animal oblations :—

“ The slaying of cattle was, likewise, always regarded by the principal part of idolaters with detestation, and brute animals of that kind were held in high estimation by all of them ; and at this day there are idolaters to be met with in India, who never slay them, even in those places where they are accustomed to slaughter sheep and similar animals.

“ To obliterate such erroneous opinions from the minds of men, it was enjoined that only these three kinds of animals, rams, goats, and cattle, should be offered in sacrifice, as it is said, ‘ Ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock ;’ (Lev. i. 2 ;) so that by this means, that was offered to God as an atonement for our sin, which they esteemed as a crime of the greatest turpitude ; and those depraved sentiments, which are, as it were, the disease and ulcer of the human soul, were cured by directly opposite measures.” (Page 273.)

Thus, to find a reason consistent with his theory, that the law is to be interpreted throughout by the principle of a rival and contradictory ritual to that of the idolaters, he assumes it to be a fact, that the ancient nations in immediate connexion with the Jews had the same aversion to kill animals as the Brahmins of India ; which, as a general position, is wholly contrary to the truth of history.

That there are plausible and sometimes ingenious reasons for some of the minor precepts and customs of the Jews, in the “ More Nevochim,” we acknowledge. Upon the whole, however, it is a very poor book, considered as an exposition of the Jewish institutions. But this poverty renders it instructive. It instructs by its omissions, by its absurdities, and its irrelevancies ; and thus will be a useful publication to those who regard it in this negative light, and avail themselves of the much better help for understanding the law of Moses which the judicious and enlightened translator has wisely connected with it. The whole powerfully teaches

this lesson,—that the Old Testament is as inexplicable to a Jew without Christ, as the New Testament is to a Socinian without a divine and atoning Christ ; and that where this master-doctrine is wanting, the light of learning only leads astray, and ingenuity of criticism only renders perplexity more intricate.

THE END.

